The Centenary Edition.

THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI,

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH,

Bishop of Saint Agatha, and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

THE ASCETICAL WORKS.

Volume XXII.

LETTERS.

Volume V.

PART II.

Special Correspondence.

THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.

RÑDE PATER:

Memoriam gloriosi Congregationis SS. Redemptoris Fundatoris, centesimo, ab ejus obitu, adventante anno, pio et admodum opportuno consilio recolere aggressus es, dum omnia ipsius opera anglice vertenda, et typis edenda curasti. Summus itaque Pontifex, cui tum S. Doctoris exaltatio, tum fidelium utilitas summopere cordi est libentissime excepit 9 volumina huc usque edita, quæ Ei offerre voluisti. Ac dum meritas Tibi laudes de hac perutili tua cura præbet, et gratias de filiali oblatione agit, Benedictionem, quam tuis obsequentissimis litteris petiisti, Emi quoque archiepiscopi Baltimorensis commendationi obsecundans, ex intimo corde impertiit.

Hæc ad Te deferens fausta cuncta ac felicia a Domino Tibi adprecor.

Paternitatis Tuæ,

Addictissimus,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

ROMAE, die 4 Junii, 1888.

TRANSLATION.

REVEREND FATHER:

As the centenary of the death of the illustrious Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer drew near, you conceived the pious and appropriate plan of shedding a new lustre on his memory by translating all his works into English and publishing them. The Holy Father, therefore, who has at heart the spiritual advancement of the faithful, as well as the exaltation of the holy Doctor, has most graciously accepted the nine volumes thus far published, which you wished to present to him. While bestowing upon you well-deserved praise for your useful labor, and thanking you for the gift inspired by your filial love, he gives you from his heart the blessing which you humbly asked for in your letter, complying also with the request of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore.

As the bearer of this, I wish you all happiness in the Lord.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

ROME, June 4, 1888.

The Centenary Edition.

LETTERS OF ST. ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI,

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH,

Bishop of Saint Agatha, and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

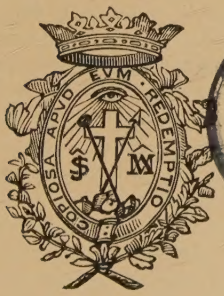
REV. THOMAS W. MULLANEY,

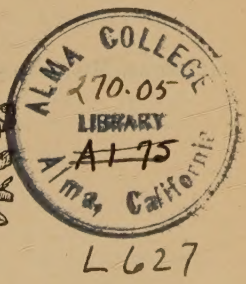
Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

PART II.

Special Correspondence.

Volume II.





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APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Matthias Raus, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled "Letters", which is Vol. XXII. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, called "The Centenary Edition".

FERDINAND A. LITZ, C. SS. R.,
Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.

BALTIMORE, MD., *March* 1, 1897.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

APPROBATION, ... IV

LETTERS OF ST. ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI.

PART II.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

(Conclusion.)

A. D. 1771.

LETTER

242. TO GIAMBATTISTA REMONDINI.—He thanks him for a present, and speaks of additions to the seventh edition of the *Moral Theology*.—Arienzo, July 8, . . . 3

243. TO THE SAME.—His endeavors to secure the royal approbation for the *Sermons for Sundays*.—Arienzo, July 28, 5

244. TO THE SAME.—He sends the additions for the *Moral*, and speaks of the difficulty of obtaining the royal approbation for his works.—Arienzo, August 1, ... 6

245. TO THE SAME.—He desires him to withhold the new edition of the *Moral*.—Arienzo, August 18, . . . 8

246. TO THE SAME.—He inquires about the additions for the *Moral*, and informs him of the royal permission for the publication of the *Sermons*.—Arienzo, September 1, . 9

247. TO THE SAME.—He sends the *Sermons* with some corrections, and tells him of another favor obtained from his Majesty.—Arienzo, October 3, ... 11

248. TO THE SAME.—The same subject.—October 3, . . 12

249. TO THE SAME.—Opposition to the *Sermons* at Naples. The prohibition of the *Homo Apostolicus* in Portugal.—[Arienzo, November], ... 13

A. D. 1772.

LETTER PAGE

250. To Giambattista Remondini.—He excuses himself for not undertaking the *Sermons for Feasts*. The pleasure it would afford him to see the edition of his *Ascetical Works* begun.—[Arienzo, January], ... 17

251. To D. Giulio Lorenzo Selvaggio.—The revision of the *History of the Heresies*.—Arienzo, February 22, . . 19

252. To the Same.—His grief at some remarks of the censor for the crown.—[Arienzo, beginning of April], . 21

253. To Marquis Bernardo Tanucci, Prime Minister. —Dedication of the *History of the Heresies*.—Arienzo, 22

254. To Father Pietro Paolo Blasucci.—Joy of the saint at the cessation of the persecution at Girgenti. Precautions for the future.—Arienzo, May 14, . . . 25

255. To Giambattista Remondini.—He informs him of the royal approbation of the *History of the Heresies*. His resolution not to write any more on scientific subjects.—Arienzo, May 31, ... 32

256. To the Same.—He sends him the *History of the Heresies*.—Arienzo, June 15, ... 34

257. To the Same.—Recommendations regarding the printing of the *History of the Heresies*. A request to withhold the publication of the *Moral*.—Arienzo, June 15, 36

258. To the Same.—He speaks of the worth of the *History of the Heresies*, and of his resolution of recasting the *Moral*.—Arienzo, July 12, ... 39

259. To the Same.—His sympathy with him in his misfortune.—Arienzo, July 15, ... 41

260. To the Same.—The saint's interest in Remondini.—Reasons for not making certain changes in the *Moral*.—Arienzo, July 30, ... 43

261. To Father Pietro Paolo Blasucci.—A clear and concise abridgment of his *Moral System*. The damage caused by Jansenism.—Arienzo, August 5, . . . 47

262. To a Priest.—He replies to some objections to certain passages in the *History of the Heresies*.—[Arienzo, August], ... 49

263. To Giambattista Remondini.—On account of age and infirmity, he will not write any more scientific works.—

LETTER PAGE

His regard for the publisher. The new edition of the *Moral Theology*.—Arienzo, August 20, ... 54

264. To Giambattista Remondini.—He promises him further assistance in the renewed persecutions against him, and speaks of the *Moral* and the *Homo Apostolicus*. —Arienzo, September 7, ... 58

265. To Giuseppe Remondini.—The same subject.—Arienzo, October 19, ... 61

266. To Giambattista Remondini.—He acknowledges the receipt of the *Sermons for Sundays*, and praises the edition.—Other works upon which he is engaged.—Arienzo, October 29, ... 62

267. To the Same.—His joy at the completion of the seventh edition of the *Moral*. He recommends the publication of the *History of the Heresies*.—Arienzo, November 17, 64

A. D. 1773.

268. To the Same.—He proposes a means of selling the publisher's books. The motive which guided him in all his writings.—Arienzo, January 31, ... 66

269. To the Same.—He asks a favor. The reception given to his works in Germany.—Arienzo, March 2, . . . 69

270. To the Same.—The great affection of the saint for Remondini.—Arienzo, March 27, ... 70

271. To the Same.—He informs him of his serious illness, and of negotiations with regard to the sale of the books. —Arienzo, April 25, ... 72

272. To the Same. — Concerning the sale of the books.—Arienzo, May 8, ... 74

273. To the Same.—He speaks of an addition for the *History of the Heresies*, and asks for some copies of the *Moral*. —Arienzo, May 27, ... 75

274. To the Same.—He asks for some copies of the *Moral*.—[Arienzo, June], ... 76

275. To the Same.—Negotiations for the sale of the books. —Arienzo, June 19, ... 77

276. To the Same.—He asks some favors.—Arienzo, July 10, 78

277. To Giuseppe Remondini.—He acknowledges the receipt of a letter, and speaks of the sale of the books.—[Arienzo, beginning of August], ... 79

LETTER PAGE

278. To Giuseppe Remondini.—He apprises him of an error for which he suggests a remedy. His joy at the publication of the *History of the Heresies*.—Arienzo, August 21, 80

279. To the Same.—He sends a copy of the Brief to be inserted in the *Bullarium* of Benedict XIV.—Arienzo, August 26, ... 82

280. To the Same.—He speaks of the sale of the publisher's books.—Arienzo, September 23, ... 84

281. To the Same.—He thanks him for some favors, and informs him of the sending of the work on the *Passion*.—Arienzo, October 7, ... 85

282. To the Same.—He acknowledges the receipt of some books, and asks for an explanation with regard to the price.—Arienzo, October 21, ... 87

283. To the Same.—The same subject.—Arienzo, November 14, ... 87

284. To Father Andrea Villani.—He explains the reasons that compel him to refute a new adversary.—[Arienzo, November 21], ... 89

285. To Giuseppe Remondini.—He acknowledges the receipt of a letter, and speaks of various matters.—Arienzo, December 2, ... 92

A. D. 1774.

286. To the Same.—His health much impaired by application to a new work. The sale of the publisher's books.—Arienzo May 22, ... 93

287. To Pope Clement XIV.—He dedicates to him the *Translation of the Psalms*, ... 95

288. To Giuseppe Remondini.—He thanks him for his solicitude, and also for the publication of the work on the *Passion*.—Arienzo, June 30, ... 97

289. To the Same.—Negotiations for the sale of the books. He will take no remuneration for his services.—Arienzo, August 3, ... 98

290. To the Same.—He sends the *Translation of the Psalms*.—Arienzo, September 28, ... 99

291. To the Same.—He thanks him for a present, and speaks of a new work already begun.—Arienzo, November 3, . 101

LETTER PAGE

292. To Saverio Mattei.—He thanks him for his letter, and praises his work on the Psalms.—Arienzo, November 20, ... 102

293. To Onofrio Paci, Printer at Naples.—He begs him to suspend the printing of his works, and gives his reasons for this measure.—[Arienzo, December], . . . 104

A. D. 1775.

294. To Giambattista Remondini.—The success of the *Translation of the Psalms*. A very useful work to be added to the *Victories of the Martyrs*.—Arienzo, January 5, 105

295. To the Same.—He thanks him for a favor, and promises to send the *Victories of the Martyrs*.—Arienzo, February 9, ... 106

296. To the Same.—He inquires about the publication of F. Patuzzi's Moral Theology.—Nocera, September 8, . 107

297. To Pope Pius VI.—Dedication of *The Admirable Conduct of Divine Providence*, ... 109

A. D. 1776.

298. To Giuseppe Remondini.—He sends *The Admirable Conduct*, and speaks of a *Manifesto* in explanation and defence of his *System*.—Nocera, February 12, . . . 111

299. To the Same.—A letter to be transmitted—Nocera de' Pagani, March 7, ... 114

300. To Canon Giuseppe Simioli.—His regard for St. Thomas, and his profound submission to the constituted ecclesiastical authorities.—[Nocera,] July 15, . . . 115

301. To Canon Salvatore Ruggieri.—A defence of certain passages criticised by the ecclesiastical censor.—Nocera, July 22, ... 116

302. To Giuseppe Remondini.—Various works to be published.—Nocera de' Pagani, August 28, . . . 119

303. To the Same.—Inquiries concerning the printing of two works.—Nocera de' Pagani, October 9, . . . 121

304. To the Same.—He asks for a copy of the *Translation of the Psalms*. His fears concerning the fate of this work.—Nocera de' Pagani, October 17, ... 122

305. To the Same.—He asks for some copies of the *Moral*,

LETTER PAGE

and laments over the prohibition of the *Homo Apostolicus* in Portugal.—Nocera de' Pagani, November 15, . 123

306. To Giuseppe Remondini.—Advice concerning the forwarding of books.—Nocera de' Pagani, November 21, 125

307. To the Same.—His zeal for the infallibility of the Pope.—Nocera, December 4, ... 126

308. To the Same.—His joy at the success of the *Homo Apostolicus* in spite of the prohibition against it.—[Nocera de' Pagani, end of December], ... 128

A. D. 1777.

309. To the Members of the Royal Chamber of Santa Chiara.—A defence of his *Moral Theology*.—[Nocera, end of March], ... 131

310. To Giuseppe Remondini.—Inquiry concerning the publication of the new edition of the *Moral*.—Nocera, April 7, ... 150

311. To the Same.—Directions with regard to their correspondence. Changes to be introduced in the new edition of the *Moral*.—Nocera de' Pagani, May 15, . . 151

312. To the Same.—The same subject.—Nocera, June 6, . 152

313. To the Same.—He asks for some books.—Pagani, June 19, ... 154

314. To the Same.—His last work on the *Moral Theology*. All future editions to be published in accordance with it.—Nocera, June 26, ... 156

315. To Father Lemetre.—He requests him to disabuse a Father of his Congregation of a false notion of his doctrine.—Nocera de' Pagani, July 15, ... 160

316. To Giuseppe Remondini.—His grief at the publication of an edition of the *Moral* without his knowledge.—Nocera, November 27, ... 161

317. To Onofrio Paci.—The publication of the smaller works of St. Thomas not advisable.—Nocera, December 1, . 163

318. To Giuseppe Remondini.—He thanks him for a present. A new edition of the *Moral*.—Nocera de' Pagani, December 3, ... 165

319. To Onofrio Paci.—Encouragement to publish the smaller works of St. Thomas.—Nocera, December 3, . . 166

LETTER PAGE

320. To Onofrio Paci.—A small work to be printed.—Nocera, December 21, ... 167

A. D. 1778.

321. To Giuseppe Remondini.—Inquiries concerning the publication of *The Admirable Conduct.*—Nocera de' Pagani, February 20, ... 168
322. To the Same.—Recommendation to print the above-mentioned work.—Nocera, March 23, ... 169
323. To the Same.—Recommendation to print the new *Moral* and *The Admirable Conduct.*—Nocera, April 19, . . 171
324. To the Same.—His correspondence with Abbe Nonnotte. The conversion of Voltaire.—Nocera, May 28, . . 172
325. To the Same.—Various reports of the death of Voltaire. —Nocera de' Pagani, July 9, ... 174

A. D. 1779.

326. To the Paci Brothers.—He empowers them to obtain permission to publish his works.—Nocera de' Pagani, July 29, ... 175
327. To Giuseppe Remondini. — His joy and thankfulness that the edition of the newly-revised *Moral* has been published.—Nocera de' Pagani, October 21, . . 176
328. To the Same.—He asks for some copies of the *Moral.*— Nocera de' Pagani, November 17, ... 177
329. To the Same.—Concerning the price of the *Moral.*—Nocera, December 27, ... 178

A. D. 1780.

330. To the Same.—He excuses himself for not remitting the price of the books received.—Pagani, March 11. . . 179

A. D. 1781.

331. To the Same.—A request for more copies of the *Moral.* —Nocera de' Pagani, January 8, ... 180

PASTORAL LETTERS.

A. D. 1744.

LETTER PAGE

332. To the Fathers of the Congregation.—The manner of conducting Missions and Retreats.—[Ciorani], . 183
333. To the Same.—The manner of conducting Retreats for ecclesiastics.—[About 1756], ... 197

A. D. 1762.

334. To the Clergy of the Diocese.—Recommendations and ordinances.—Sant' Agata, July 30, ... 204
335. To the Rural Deans.—Ordinances abolishing the abuse of the chase.—Sant' Agata de' Goti, August 30, . 208
336. To Giulio Danco.—He orders him to communicate a certain notice to the regular clergy,—Sant' Agata, September 7, ... 211
337. To Don Francisco Filippo.—He informs him of a general order which is shortly to be published.—Sant' Agata, September 14, ... 212
338. To the Rural Deans.—Ordinance concerning the late Mass on festivals.—Sant' Agata, November 7, . . 213
339. To the Parish Priests.—The manner of making mental prayer with the children during Holy Mass.—[Sant' Agata], ... 215

A. D. 1763.

340. To the Archpriests, Parish Priests, and Confessors of the Diocese.—Ordinances regulating the administration of the Sacrament of Penance during Paschal time.—Sant' Agata, February 20, ... 218
341. To the Archpriests and Parish Priests.—Suspension incurred *ipso facto* by those who say Mass too hurriedly.—Sant' Agata, November 28, ... 222
342. To the Parish Priests and Confessors. — The communication of a faculty.—[December?] 223

A. D. 1764.

343. To the Same.—Renewal of the ordinances of the previous year relating to the administration of the sacra-

LETTER PAGE

ments during the Paschal season.—Sant' Agata, February 28, ... 225

344. To the Archpriests and Parish Priests.—Ordinance concerning the celebration of Holy Mass.—Sant' Agata, June 8, ... 227

345. To the Clergy of Frasso.—Various ordinances upon points of ecclesiastical discipline necessitated by the Canonical Visitation.—Frasso, July 22, ... 228

346. To the Clergy of the Diocese.—Prohibition of certain games.—Sant' Agata de' Goti, November 2, . . 239

347. To the Canons Confessors of Sant' Agata.—He reminds them of their duty to be in the confessional especially on festivals.—[Sant' Agata, November], . 240

348. To the Canons of the Cathedral, Chaplains, and Canons of the Diocese.—*Notification I.*—[End of 1764], ... 241

349. To the Archpriests, Parish Priests, Rectors, and Confessors.—*Notification II.*—[End of 1764], . . 244

350. To the Confessors of the Diocese, Secular and Regular.—*Notification III.*—[End of 1764], . . 252

351. To the Secular Clergy.—*Notification IV.*—[End of 1764], ... 256

352. To the Candidates for Holy Orders.—*Notification V.*—[End of 1764], ... 259

353. To the Priests and Clerics.—*Notification VI.*—[End of 1764], ... 263

A. D. 1765.

354. To Don Francesco di Filippo.—Orders relative to the execution of the foregoing *Notifications*.—Sant' Agata, April 19, ... 265

355. To the Sacred Congregation of the Council.—Report of the saint upon the condition of his diocese.—Sant' Agata de' Goti, July 8, ... 266

A. D. 1766.

356. To the Rural Deans.—He forbids the examination in Christian doctrine to take place outside the Church.—Arienzo, March 16, ... 290

LETTER PAGE

A. D. 1767.

357. To the Archpriest and Parish Priests of Arienzo.—He commands the observance of the order with regard to the late Mass on festivals.—Arienzo, June 10, . 291
358. To Don Pasquale Mauro. — He establishes punishments for the removal of certain abuses.—[Airola, June 27], ... 292
359. To the Rural Deans.—Ordinance respecting processions.—Sant' Agata de' Goti, June 30, ... 295
360. To the Rural Deans of Frasso.—He inculcates the exact observance of existing ordinances—Sant' Agata de' Goti, July 11, ... 297

A. D. 1768.

361. To the Clergy.—Various regulations of ecclesiastical discipline.—[1768?] 299
362. To the Sacred Congregation of the Council.—Second report of the saint on the condition of his diocese.—Sant' Agata de' Goti, April 28, ... 301
363. To Ferdinand IV., King of Naples.—He represents to him the evil of duelling and the condemnation passed upon it by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and beseeches him to revive these enactments.—[1768?] . 307

A. D. 1770.

364. To the Canons and Chaplains of the Cathedral.—Various points of choral discipline.—Arienzo, December 29, ... 311

A. D. 1771.

365. To the Sacred Congregation of the Council.—Third report of the saint on the condition of his diocese.—[September?] 314
366. To Don Pasquale Mauro.—He insists on the execution of the ordinance relating to ecclesiastical attire.—Arienzo, October 28, ... 320
367. To the Same.—He declares his esteem for the clergy.—Arienzo, November 4, ... 321

LETTER PAGE

A. D. 1772.

368. To Ferdinand IV., King of Naples. — He entreats him not to allow nominations to canonries to be made by the municipalities.—[1772], ... 322
369. To Mgr. Carlo Bergamo, Bishop of Gaeta.—Advice with respect to the government of his diocese.—Arienzo, March 12, ... 323
370. To Don Liborio Carfora.—Effectual means of diffusing the knowledge of Christian doctrine.—Arienzo, November 17, ... 328

A. D. 1773.

371. To Father Terzi, Dominican.—A request to denounce certain injustices.—Arienzo, March 30, . . . 329
372. To Ferdinand IV., King of Naples. -- He defends his manner of acting in the conferring of benefices.—Arienzo, May 25, ... 330
373. Document declaring null and void the conferring of a benefice.—Arienzo, September 28, ... 339

A. D. 1774.

374. To Archdeacon Rainone.—He asks his advice concerning the conferring of a canonry.—Arienzo, December 4, 341

A. D. 1775.

375. To the Parish Priests. — Recommendations with regard to the teaching of Christian doctrine.—Arienzo, February 9, ... 343
376. To Don Michele Nuzzi.—He will confer no benefices on strangers.—Arienzo, February 27, ... 344

A. D. 1776.

377. To Canon Cicerone.—Answer to a question proposed to him.—Nocera de' Pagani, July 21, ... 345

A. D. 1778.

378. To A Priest.—The obligations of a good pastor.—Nocera, October 21, ... 349

SUPPLEMENTARY LETTERS.

LETTER PAGE

1. To Father Carmine Picone.—Recommendations with regard to the novices.—[Nocera de' Pagani, June, 1755], 350
2. To A Young Father of the Congregation.—He recommends the daily study of Moral Theology.—[1755], 351
3. To Father Tannoia.—Two cases of Moral Theology.—[Year uncertain], ... 352
4. To the Sovereign Pontiff Clement XIII.—He gives him an account of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and presents him with some of his works.—Nocera, October 24, 1758, ... 353
5. To Giambattista Remondini.—A request for certain printed folios to which he attaches great importance.—Sant' Agata, May 3, 1765, ... 355
6. To Father Angelo Maione. — His solicitude for a sick Brother. Various charges.—Arienzo, August 22, 1771, ... 356
7. To Don Liborio Carfora.—Orders for the removal of a grave scandal.—Arienzo, July 19, 1775, . . . 358
8. Letter to a Religious on the Manner of Preaching, ... 359
9. Letter to A Bishop on the Utility of Missions, 404

Index. 423

Special Correspondence.

II.

SCIENTIFIC LETTERS.

(1771 — 1781.)

LETTERS OF
ST. ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI.

PART II.

Special Correspondence.

FIRST SERIES.—SCIENTIFIC LETTERS.

(Conclusion.)

LETTER 242.

To Signor Giambattista Remondini.

He thanks him for a work sent him as a present, and speaks of the additions to be made in the seventh edition of the *Moral Theology*.

ARIENZO, July 8, 1771.

Most Illustrious Sir: Last evening, thanks be to God, I received the three volumes of Father Patuzzi's *Moral Theology*. I thought these constituted the whole work, but, as I see, they are only the smaller part. Let me have some time to look them over before you begin the new edition of my *Moral*. I wish to see whether there is anything worthy of note that might be added.

I am sorry that I have to read the proofs of the third volume of the *History of the Heresies*. This part contains the refutations, and, consequently, requires all my attention. However, I shall try to give a glance at both.

I have thought over many points to be added to the new edition of the *Moral.* I have noted them on the enclosed slip, so that you may know about them, whatever turns up, for they are matters that must, of necessity, be added. Many of them are already found in the *Homo Apostolicus*, but they are not as yet in the *Moral.*

I thank you for the present of these three volumes, and I shall expect the others as soon as published.

To return to the additions for the *Moral.* I intended to send you with this letter a small note on certain matters; but on going over my papers just now, I see there are six or seven of these additions, all very important, and some of them rather lengthy. I cannot, therefore, put them on a single slip as I intended. I shall write them in a special blank-book, and send it to you. This work I shall begin at once.

If you determine on printing the *Moral* soon, let me know, and I shall send you this blank-book, at least. I say, *at least*, for to send you the reflections I shall perhaps make on Father Patuzzi's work, will require some time. And again, as I mentioned above, I still need the most important parts of the work; for in the three volumes that you sent me, these treatises are not contained. Let me know how you would wish me to forward this note-book to you; for go it must, since it will contain very necessary additions. Shall I send it in a letter or through Signor Moschini? The latter is a long route; the former is safer, but more expensive on account of the postal rates. Still, it will be the better course. I shall have the notes closely written in small characters, thus to reduce the size of the package.

The volume of *Sermons* is not yet out of the toils. Had I perfect patience, this blessed book would have gained for me immense merit before God.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your most devoted and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] I shall see that the package received with the books of Father Patuzzi, is sent to Signor Moschini.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 243.

To the Same.

He tells him of his endeavors to secure the royal approbation for the *Sermons for Sundays*, and of the early transmission of the additions for the *Moral*.

ARIENZO, July 28, 1771.

Most Illustrious Sir: Don Felice has written to you that I am awaiting the good pleasure of the Lord to see my volume of *Sermons* released, and also to have the consolation of sending you a copy. I am still aiming at bringing my design to a happy conclusion; therefore, I hope soon to obtain what we desire.

For some time past I have been engaged upon the additions for the *Moral*, and, I trust, I shall be able to send them to you next week without fail. I shall forward them in a letter, that you may receive them more quickly and securely, and have them in time to arrange in their

proper places. Please remember that I hope to be able to send these additions next week.

Be careful of your health, and believe me

Your most devoted and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 244.

To the Same.

He sends him the additions mentioned in the preceding letter, making some appropriate explanations and recommendations, and speaks of the great difficulty of obtaining the royal approbation for his works.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, August 1, 1771.

Most Illustrious Sir: I send you the additions, which I have hastened to complete during the past few days at the cost of much labor. They are not trifles, I assure you, but matters of very great importance.

At the beginning there is a second *Monitum* which must be added on page 22, where the first *Monitum* prefixed to the *Moral* ends. This *Monitum* occupies three pages.[1] On page 4 of the note-book, there are seven additions pertaining to different subjects, some of which must be taken from the last edition of the *Homo Apostolicus;* for I have remarked that they have been added to that work, but are not found in the *Moral.*

I earnestly recommend the compositor and the proof-

[1] It began thus: *Postquam hæc typis mandassem, valde miratus sum legendo apud novam theologiam, editam a P. Patutio, etc.* It was inserted in the seventh, and in all subsequent editions down to our own times.

reader to be very attentive, for the additions had to be written in small characters. Many mistakes will, therefore, occur if the proof-reader is not experienced, and does not do his work with extreme attention.

I take this occasion to remark that, in some of the notes, particularly in one, there are many errors in the space of a few lines. This shows that they were not examined by your regular proof-reader, who is, I perceive, both able and careful.

Relieve my anxiety, I beg you, by informing me as soon as you receive this letter with the accompanying note-book.

With regard to the volume of *Sermons*, I am in hopes of seeing it out of the toils in a few days. At present, it is in close custody, though I have been content to forfeit my reputation a little to effect its release. But what can I do? When the tempest blows, we must bow to the blast. To secure the publication of this work, I have thrown Naples into an uproar, and written memorials and letters enough to fill a volume.

With sincere respect, I subscribe myself

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] Just now I am in further embarrassment on account of the *History of the Heresies*. But there is no way of avoiding these things. He that appears in print, must arm himself with patience, if he would not die of vexation.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 245.

To the Same.

He desires him to withhold the new edition of the *Moral*.

ARIENZO, August 18, 1771.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your letter. In reply, I would inform you that I have already sent you the additions for the new edition of the *Moral*. I hope you have received them by this, also that they reached you in time to be arranged in their respective places as indicated. In them I have said what I thought necessary in regard to Father Patuzzi's work.

I have been assured that all obstacles to the publication of the *Sermons* have been removed. In a few days, therefore, I hope to send you the copy which, as I frequently wrote, I have had in readiness so long. I trust that you have instructed Signor Moschini to forward it to you as soon as possible; for I flatter myself that the few copies I have had printed at Naples will disappear in a very short time, so great is the eagerness for them, if I may judge from the multiplied demands.

I am finishing the new work on the *Heresies*. The second volume, which brings the historical part to an end, has already been printed. There is yet a third volume, which will deal with the refutation of the principal heresies. This I hope to complete in the near future, and then I shall have the honor of sending you a copy of it.

Anticipating all your inquiries with regard to the new edition of the *Moral*, I had already written to you, by all means to withhold the printing. I was, therefore, much annoyed to learn that you had begun the work; for the largest addition, and the one that most concerns me, as it is a reply to what I found in Father Patuzzi's *Moral*, belongs near the very beginning of the work, and is to be

added to the treatise on *Probabilism.* I should, then, be very much displeased to have it passed over or inserted in any place other than the proper one.[1]

I have also sent you all the other notes that were in the *Homo Apostolicus;* but in the *Moral* these notes must be arranged in a manner different from that in which they stand in the former work. If they were arranged in the same order, great confusion would result.

I ask you again to withhold the printing a little while longer, until you receive the additions, if you have not yet received them. Let me know as soon as they reach you; for, as I have previously written, should they, unfortunately, be lost, I have copies of them.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 246.

To the Same.

He inquires about the additions for the *Moral*, and informs him of the royal permission for the publication of the *Sermons*.

ARIENZO, September 1, 1771.

Most Illustrious Sir: As I have had no news from you for some time, I am very anxious to know whether or not you have received the letter in which I enclosed a sheet containing the additions for the new edition of the *Moral Theology*. The places in which all these notes were to be inserted, were distinctly marked. I beg you to write to me

[1] This was the second *Monitum*, of which mention was made in the preceding letter.

as soon as possible, and set my mind at rest by letting me know whether you received my letter and the additions in time, that is, before the work was printed. Should these notes, unfortunately, have been lost, I beseech you to delay the printing until I shall send you another copy of them; for I should be deeply pained if they did not arrive in time, or if this new edition were to appear without them in their proper places.

I wrote to you recently that permission to publish the volume of *Sermons* had been granted. But as the approbation of the royal censor was misplaced, it was necessary to have recourse once more to our Sovereign Lord, the King, to institute a new revision. This evening I received information that the permission has been granted. In a few days, therefore, I shall certainly send you the copy that I have had in readiness so long.

With the best wishes for your health and the assurance of my willingness to serve you,

I remain

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] We have here a number of copies of the *Truth of Faith*, sent by mistake instead of the dogmatic work on the *Council of Trent*. Let me know what is to be done with them, and whether you would be satisfied if I should try to dispose of them at the best price we could get.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 247.

To the Same.

He sends the *Sermons* with some additions and corrections for republication, and tells him of another favor obtained from his Majesty.

ARIENZO, October 3, 1771.

Most Illustrious Sir: This evening, thanks be to God, I learned that the memorial authorizing the publication of my volume of *Sermons* has been issued from the palace and sent to the ministry. At present, some friends of mine are going around at my expense among the members of that body to influence them to have the memorial signed, so that we may not have to wait until after the feasts in November.

God only knows the labor, the expense, the trouble, and the anxiety I have suffered for the past year and a half to reach this end; for so confused were the letters between the Secretary of the King and the Curia of the Grand Almoner, that I thought the end would never come. Blessed be God who has given me the consolation of seeing all terminate so happily for his glory!

As soon as the work is published at Naples, I shall have the honor of sending you a copy through Signor Moschini, who, I trust, will be careful to forward it to you, as I have requested him. In this copy, you will find many additions and corrections. I beseech you to recommend your proof-reader to be extremely careful in arranging all in their respective places and in the manner pointed out in the original. I ask you, also, to use good paper and clear type, as I entertain the hope that this work will be well received, and sell very rapidly. Requests for it are coming in from all sides.

I have asked his Majesty in your behalf, to order that

this work may not be printed at Naples for two years; for the very booksellers to whom I would not give the book, have asked me for hundreds of copies. I hope this piece of information will be pleasing to you.

On the last leaf of the book, I have had printed a list of all my works. Oblige me by printing it, if possible, at the beginning rather than at the end. I trust this can be done. If it cannot, do as you think best. It is enough that it is published.

No more at present.

Your most humble and devoted servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 248.[1]

To th Same.

The same subject.

ARIENZO, October 3, 1771.

Most Illustrious Sir: I send you herewith the long-expected volume of *Sermons:* for now, thanks be to God, the royal permission authorizing its publication has been issued.

I have already sent you a letter by post, requesting you to recommend the proof-reader to be very attentive to insert the additions in their respective places, and to make the corrections. I asked you, furthermore, to print the list of all my published works at the beginning of this volume. As the book is at present, this list is at the end. If the

[1] This letter was sent with the book through Signor Moschini. The saint informed Remondini of it in the preceding letter, which was sent by post.

change cannot be made, do as you think best. It will be enough that the list is published.

I also asked you to use good paper and clear type. I have nothing more to add.

With best wishes for your health and the assurance of my readiness to serve you,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 249.

To the Same.

He speaks of the measures taken to prevent the publication of the *Sermons* at Naples, and of a translation of the same. He informs him of the prohibition of the *Homo Apostolicus* in Portugal, and expresses his fears concerning the approbation of the *History of the Heresies.*

[ARIENZO, November, 1771.]

Most Illustrious Sir: I have just received two of your esteemed letters, from the second of which I rejoiced to learn that you expected to receive my *Sermons for Sundays* on the arrival of the courier from Rome. I hope, therefore, that you have received it by this, and sent it to press. It has already been printed here, and they have begun to sell it.

God only knows all the trouble I had to prevent the publishers here from printing this work, for many of them made endeavors, and great endeavors indeed, to do so. In fact, I was informed that one of them had printed all but seven folios. However, to cut short his proceedings, and to deter others from imitating him, I have obtained

from the court at my own expense, as my secretary Don Felice wrote to you, a prohibition whereby the publishers of Naples are forbidden under severe penalties, to print this work of mine for several years, without my express permission. I leave you to imagine the discomfiture of the printers and booksellers when this order of his Majesty was made known to them.

Some months ago I gave this book to be translated, a work which is still going on. To-day I have written making inquiries about it.[1] I should like to know whether you want only the *Sermons* translated, or, also, the little works that follow. For my part, I think it would be enough to translate the *Sermons* and some one or other of the little works that might be more necessary, as, for instance, *On the Manner of Preaching*, and the like. Let me have an answer on this point as soon as possible.

I have learned that they have forbidden my *Homo Apostolicus* in Portugal. I was, indeed, much surprised that they refrained so long, as they condemned my *Moral Theology* long ago. What would you have me say? God's will be done!

For your consolation, however, let me tell you that, at Naples, this work sells well. My secretary and I disposed of twenty-three copies in a very short time. The proceeds of this sale I have sent to Naples to be transmitted to Signor Moschini.

As they prohibited the *Moral Theology*, they had as a consequence to prohibit the *Compendium;* for the *Homo Apostolicus* always quotes the larger work and, as it were, forces the reader to procure it, to be completely satisfied on the various questions. Yet it is clear that they have forbidden the work not on account of lax teaching, but

[1] We do not know whether this translation was ever completed; but it is certain that it was never published.

because they think I am a follower of the Jesuits. For the same reason they have proscribed Antoine, also, although his doctrine is too rigorous,—and this has gained for him, Jesuit though he be, the friendship of Concina and Patuzzi.[1]

Speaking of Father Patuzzi, I should like to know whether he is continuing the publication of his *Moral Theology*.

I trust that by the next post I shall hear that you have received the copy of my *Sermons* and the notes. Should it have gone astray, inform me, and I shall send you at once another copy with the same notes, all of which I have preserved.

Do you know I had almost given up hope of seeing this work published? To tell the story of all the obstacles that beset it, would require another volume. I had to work diligently one year and a half to secure its publication. This is a sign that it will produce much good; for the devil has put himself to all this trouble solely to prevent its appearance. I am afraid he will exert himself still more to oppose the more elaborate and useful work, the *History of the Heresies*, which is now nearing completion.

As ever, Illustrious Sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

1 The saint's conjectures were correct. The truly stupid fury against the Jesuits, as Carayon remarks ["Documents inédits", vol. ix. p. 303, 189, 622, 263], did not cease with the prohibition of their works, but went so far as, in 1775, to issue a decree commanding under the severest penalties all the subjects of the crown, whether religious or seculars, and whatever their rank or dignity, to burn all books whose authors were Jesuits. Hence it is not surprising that all those writers were included who in any way soever came under the name of Jesuits.

[*Postscript of the secretary.*][1] Don Felice presents his compliments, and hopes to send you by the next post the portrait of his Lordship, which you so earnestly desire. He has had it made in miniature on a small sheet. They are now making the inscription. You will receive it enclosed in a letter. As the picture has been taken in half-size and without any special surroundings, you may give it any background you please.

Do not mention anything on this point in your letters. When you receive it, inform him merely that you have received something, but do not mention the portrait. Don Felice beseeches you to keep this secret, and not to say that you got the portrait from him. His Lordship has ideas of his own on this subject; but when he sees the portrait he will think that some Father of his Congregation has secured it for you.

Don Felice hopes that he has been of service to you not only in this matter, but likewise in thinking of having an order published to prohibit the printing of the *Sermons* at Naples. To serve you was his only intention.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

[1] This postscript was added without the knowledge of the saint —a thing very easy for the secretary. Don Felice was one of the priests mentioned by Don Salvatore Tramontano, who endeavored to secure the first portrait of the saint from the painter Bernardo Caraviello (See *Special Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 198, note). In this letter, the secretary tells Remondini that he will send the portrait to him. But the publisher, we know not why, perhaps not to annoy the saint who was so opposed to it, did not place it at the beginning of the seventh edition of the *Moral*. It was only in the ninth edition that he placed the second portrait, sent him two years before the death of the saint.

LETTER 250.

To the Same.

He excuses himself for not writing the *Sermons for Feasts*, speaks again of the reason for suppressing the *Homo Apostolicus* in Portugal, and expresses the pleasure it would afford him to see the edition of the ascetical works begun.

[ARIENZO, January, 1772.]

Most Illustrious Sir: I reply to your letter to Don Felice. You desire to have a series of *Sermons for Feasts*. But take into consideration, I beseech you, my seventy-six years. I cannot now do the work that I did in days gone by. I am so shattered that I cannot stand on my feet. My sickness has so contracted my neck that it is with difficulty I can read. I cannot eat either meat, fish, eggs, cheese or sweetmeats. Vegetable soup and fruit are my only nourishment. To write these *Sermons* on the saints would require a good head and much labor.

You have done well in using the word *Discourses* instead of *Sermons*. If I mistake not, I had myself at one time intended to call them *Discourses* rather than *Sermons*.

In spite of the prohibition of the *Homo Apostolicus* in Portugal, they are selling it at Naples, and it is becoming known in the seminaries. In Portugal, they have prohibited the work for no other reason than that they thought me a Jesuit. But I wish them to know that I do not follow the Jesuits either in Dogmatic or in Moral Theology. It is true that I have been a commentator on Busenbaum; yet everyone may see in how many points I disagree with him and other Jesuits. What is to be done? Have patience! I beg of you to make it known whenever you have a chance, that I do not follow the teaching of the Jesuits.

I should be very much pleased to learn that you will soon begin printing my ascetical works. It would be a

great consolation to me to see this *Collection* before I die.

Some days ago, I had to preach at the investiture of a nun. My discourse, it appears to me, was very practical and full of unction. It pleased everybody. I have had it copied in haste, and I send it to you with the request to insert it at the end of the *Sermons*,[1] as discourses of this kind are much sought after by those who frequently have occasion to preach at the investiture of nuns. I have had it copied in haste, but the writing is easily read. It will, however, be necessary to employ a careful proof-reader for it. It is short, but affords ample room for enlargement. As a rule, however, such discourses should be short, in order not to weary the assistants, since the ceremony of investiture is itself very long. I trust you will be pleased with it.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and devoted servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] Try to get me Duguet on the "Passion of Jesus Christ, or Jesus Crucified", and send it at your earliest convenience. Send me, also, a copy of the discourse mentioned above as soon as it is printed.

[*Postscript of the secretary.*] Don Felice presents his compliments, and is glad that the article in question reached you. He hopes to receive a copy as soon as, etc.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

[1] It was inserted under the title: "Familiar Discourse to a Young Person taking the Religious Habit." It begins thus: "Dear Sister, of this day, on which you have the happiness of being espoused to Jesus Christ, you should preserve a continual remembrance, etc."

LETTER 251.

To Don Giulio Lorenzo Selvaggio, Ecclesiastical Censor.

The revision of the *History of the Heresies.*

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, February 22, 1772.

Illustrious Sir: I have been informed that Canon Giuseppe [1] has not seen fit to allow some things in the last folio to pass, and wishes, as the printer writes me, that I should come to an understanding with you about correcting them. Be so kind, therefore, as to write me at once telling me what has to be changed, and how, in your opinion, it is to be done, so that the Canon may no longer find any difficulty.

I have been very much annoyed by one thing, namely, that I received no letter from you, and therefore did not know to what to ascribe the delay. As soon as I learned its nature, I should have replied: "Let the Canon strike out whatever he wishes, and arrange everything to his liking. I am quite willing to do as he desires."

To tell the truth, I do not understand where the difficulties can be found in the last folio. I pray you, however, to write me at once, and let me know what is to be omitted and what inserted. The Canon's orders shall be obeyed in every detail.

The printer complains that he has been obliged to suspend work, though I have been extremely anxious to have this book published soon. To reply to the extravagant notions of Father Berruyer has taken a good deal of my time, and now I see new difficulties rising where I least expected any.

Help me out of this embarrassment, I beseech you, as

1 Canon Giuseppe Simioli, censor for the crown.

soon as you can. I have nothing more to say. *Tempus loquendi, tempus tacendi* [There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent]. If it appears to you that what is to be readjusted is not of much importance, I would ask you to make the correction yourself, and give the work to the printer at once, provided such corrections involve no contradiction to what I have written in preceding pages. In a word, so long as you do not make me contradict myself, be kind enough to arrange the folio as seems to you most in accordance with the Canon's desires, and give it to the printer without delay. I shall approve everything you do, provided always there is not question of some delicate points which might cause my words to be sharply criticized at Rome.

I have read over this folio. It contains remarks which it would be of no consequence to me to see changed. There are, however, some answers to objections, and they are important. Let me know whether any of them have been found fault with. If it comes to the worst, we shall omit everything, the objections together with the solutions.

With regard to the supreme power of the Sovereign Pontiff, I am ready to lay down my life in defence of that doctrine. Take that away, and, I assure you, the authority of the Church is at an end.

This (Sunday) evening I was expecting a letter from you, according to what the printer wrote me. He said that the Canon had spoken to you of coming to an understanding with me, and of readjusting whatever needed arrangement. Once more, I ask you to give me a detailed account of the whole matter. Let me have an answer at once. I am sending you a special messenger. I should be

much pleased to have him return to-morrow evening, for which reason I close, as it is now four o'clock.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After an old copy.

LETTER 252.

To the Same.

He grieves over the terms in which the censor for the crown expresses his approbation of the work, as he fears it will be detrimental to God's glory, the only end he has in view.

[ARIENZO, beginning of April, 1772.]

. . . . When he [Canon Simioli] says that I have not consulted critical authors, it is equivalent to saying that I wrote down whatever came in my way, that I have piled every twig into my faggot. To assert that I have endeavored to convert rather than convince, means that I have written as a devotee, and not as a theologian; and to say that my reasons are shallow and my opinions dictated by the heart rather than by the head—what is all this, but really to discredit the work? What do these expressions mean, but that I have written like an imbecile?

I would not dare publish this work with such an approbation. I have not written it to gain applause for myself; I have written it for the glory of God. But what glory will

it be to God, if this book appears branded in this manner by the censor? [1]

But there is no remedy. Whoever engages in publishing must be prepared to die of vexation. If I had composed this work for my own glory and not for the glory of God, I should be in despair.

I pray you to recommend me to Jesus Christ, that he may give me strength to bear this humiliation with patience.

After an old copy.

LETTER 253.

To Marquis Bernardo Tanucci, Prime Minister.

He dedicates to him *The History of the Heresies*.[2]

ARIENZO, 1772.

Your Excellency: As I am about to publish this work, *The History of the Heresies*, there is no one, I think, to

[1] The following is the approbation of Canon Simioli to the Grand Almoner, although couched in somewhat mild terms out of regard for the saint.

"Most Illustrious and Reverend Sir: In accordance with your commands, I have examined the work, entitled: "The Triumph of the Church, or, The History of the Heresies". I have done so as soon as possible and with much pleasure. In it I have beheld the mind and spirit of the most holy prelate depicted as on a canvas, and I have perceived how carefully he has labored to weave together this history of each age, not so much from authors renowned for critical discrimination, as from writers remarkable for piety and learning. In an appendix he confutes the heretics of ancient as well as of modern times by an array of arguments taken partly from the commentaries of the past, partly from the store-house of his own ingenuity. The faith of the writer is conspicuous in some parts of the work; in others, his ingenuity shines forth; throughout the whole, his piety is perceptible. I think it may be published, if such is your good pleasure. NAPLES, April 2, 1772.

[2] Some of our readers may, perhaps, be surprised at the praise

whom I might more appropriately dedicate it than to yourself. For, standing always in the most intimate relation with our most august prince, like him you have been most zealous in defending the interests of our holy religion against unbelievers and their errors, which are spread broadcast in their numerous writings. On every side is your worth known, not only on account of your extensive knowledge of correct jurisprudence and the good government of States, as well as of those branches of learning which form a truly literary man,—but especially on account of the high rectitude with which until now you have filled the exalted position of Prime Minister of our Lord, the King, in which office you have shown yourself to be no accepter of persons, nor allowed yourself to be influenced by personal interest or human respect. These and other qualities which adorn your Excellency's person are universally known. They have won and they will still win for you the highest encomiums among all nations of the present and the future. But deserving, above all, of eternal praise is the ad-

given to the famous Tanucci by the saint in this letter. But we have here a dedicatory epistle in which fulsomeness usually abounds; besides, the saint employs this means to further influence the minister to favor good books and prevent the circulation of dangerous ones. It must be said, furthermore, that Tanucci, though a regalist of the most advanced school, and, as such, opposed to the Church and Religious Orders in very many respects, was not a renegade, nor an avowedly impious man. He possessed, indeed, deep feelings of piety which he manifested particularly at his death, as may be seen in his "Life" written by Signor Pietro Ulloa, the Duke of Lauria. It appears that he had already done much for the good of religion, for which he deserved the praise given him by the saint. The following we take from Father Tannoia: "Alphonsus had frequently represented to Marquis Tanucci, the Prime Minister, the great evils resulting from the introduction of bad books into the kingdom, and the wise and religious minister did not fail to apply suitable legislation to the matter. The introduction of these books was prohibited."—"Life of St. Alphonsus", vol. ii. b. iii. ch. 50.

mirable zeal that has characterized your endeavors to preserve pure and unsullied our holy religion throughout the kingdom, and particularly in the Capital, which glories in the title of Most Faithful. We had a new and striking proof of this same zeal in the extreme measures taken by you to prohibit, under the most severe penalties, the introduction of works infected with heresy, and in the punishment of those who violated these salutary laws by bringing in and exposing for sale in this city works of this kind. All these motives,—I shall pass over the rest, lest I should weary your patience or wound your modesty by their recital,—all these, I say, together with the high personal esteem I entertain for you, have prompted me to dedicate this work to you. I trust that in your kindness you will not disdain to accept my homage, and that you will protect the work and its author against the machinations of those who, being ill-disposed toward our holy faith, will do their utmost to bring both into disrepute.

Begging our divine Lord to bless you with all temporal and spiritual favors in reward for your merit, and to preserve your Excellency many years for the welfare of our entire kingdom,

I remain, your Excellency's

Most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the folio printed at the beginning of the work.

LETTER 254.

To Father Pietro Paolo Blasucci, Superior of the House at Girgenti, in Sicily.

Joy of the saint at the cessation of the persecution at Girgenti which he ascribes to a particular intervention of Divine Providence.—Precautions for the future.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

ARIENZO, May 14, 1772.

Very great, indeed, was the consolation your letter afforded me.[1] I am very thankful to your Reverence for

[1] The letter of Father Blasucci, to which the saint replies, is as follows:

"Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

Right Reverend and Most Dear Father: If I have delayed writing to you for reasons which I shall presently mention, let this long letter compensate for my remissness. In the first place, however, let me wish you the fulness of the joys of Easter-tide, and beg our dear Lord to preserve you and shower upon you his choicest blessings. My health is much better than usual. Father Guiliano and Brother Vincenzo have frequently been down with the tertian fever since last November; but, at present, they are convalescent. The other members of the Community are still on the missions, which, thanks be to God, are very successful, being well-attended and productive of much good. The Fathers will return home toward the end of May. They are working, as they have been all along, with pleasure and in harmony, without sparing themselves.

"I come now to what is of particular interest. God has been pleased to try us in a fierce tempest of persecution which lasted from February 16 to April 3. On the latter date, thanks to the special protection of God and our most holy Mother Mary, a great calm ensued. I did not wish to let you know of this storm till the end, whether favorable or adverse, had been reached. Indeed, I should only have grieved you by my recital, and should not have been able to console you until it was too late.

"The cause of this persecution was as follows: Mgr. Lanza dismissed from his seminary a professor of Holy Scripture named, Don Giuseppe Cannella, a chaplain of the cathedral and a native of

not having informed me of the troublous times you have had; for on the one hand, I was quite powerless to apply a remedy, and on the other, such knowledge would have

Girgenti. The reason for this was, as is now current among the people, that he taught the young theologians and others in the seminary, erroneous, heretical, and Jansenistic doctrines, in contradiction to the Bull *Unigenitus* of Clement XI., which condemns the one hundred and one propositions of Quesnelle, Michael Baius, and others. After vainly admonishing the professor twice to be more cautious in his expressions, his Lordship, as report has it, expelled him from the seminary, and forbade him to hear confessions.

"At first, this action of the prelate was considered unjust, imprudent, and ill-advised; for his Lordship, having received secret denunciations against the professor from the seminary, and not wishing to reveal to anyone the real reasons for the removal, has maintained a silence that is still unbroken. Accordingly, the townspeople, a curious, discontented set, knowing only what was on the surface, and imagining according to their own caprice the motives that could induce the bishop to such an action, began to revile first the prelate, then Signor Papi and myself, thinking that both of us had counselled and approved this step. They called us foolish, ignorant, senseless, etc. Seeing, however, that they could not in any way injure his Lordship, or the dean, Signor Papi, *commota est universa civitas contra me, folium quod vento rapitur* [they turned against me, the leaf made the sport of the wind], determined to scatter the fragments of that poor leaf through the air, and, if possible, annihilate me. The principal personages of the place, therefore, in order to cast an insult in the face of the bishop and cause him grief at our removal from Girgenti, and at having himself known in Palermo as an ignorant and ill-advised prelate, instigated Cannella to repair to Palermo, to publish and denounce the alleged misconduct of his Lordship, of myself, and of my companions. The charges against us, thanks be to God, were, that we taught Probabilism, were followers of the Jesuits, and maintained the doctrine of Molina on grace rather than the sound teaching which is, according to the extravagant and fanatical notions of Cannella, that of Jansenius, Quesnelle, and their adherents.

"Cannella departed for Palermo on the 22d of February, taking with him fourteen letters of introduction to persons in the capital, renowned for their dignity, learning, and standing. Post after post, he wrote to his patrons and friends at Girgenti of the triumphs he

caused me much anxiety and sadness. This morning I said Mass in thanksgiving to Jesus Christ for the tranquillity which has ensued. *Our friends* had, indeed,

had achieved, the applause with which he was received, and the praises lavished upon his doctrines and extravagant vagaries. With equal effrontery, he announced the speedy expulsion of those resuscitated Jesuits and Molinists, meaning ourselves, who, even as their predecessors had once persecuted the ablest theologians of the Jansenistic tenets in France, were now persecuting the most renowned exponent of that School at Girgenti.

"These crafty and meaningless communications set our adversaries all aglow with enthusiasm, and they began their song of triumph before the victory was gained. All this time, I said nothing, but remaining quiet, as one unaffected by such uproar, continued in peace and tranquillity, perfectly resigned to the holy will of God. I did not neglect, however, by prayers, novenas, disciplines in common, and generous alms, to implore God and the Blessed Virgin to allay the tempest.

"As soon as it became known in the town that our departure was only a matter of time, many pious persons made vows, novenas, fasts on bread and water, and had Masses said, etc., that Satan, justly offended at the immense good we were effecting here by our missions, might not exult in our expulsion.

"A good priest at Palermo, one from whom I did not expect such kindness, kept me informed of all that Cannella said and did against us in his endeavors to induce a member of the Council, Signor Targianni, to have a memorial against us presented at the court of Naples. Acting upon this positive information, I wrote to Signor Targianni acquainting him of the true state of affairs. I explained to him the system of doctrine we follow, and our manner of life at Girgenti, in nowise contrary to the decrees of the king. This last I mentioned because our enemies had threatened to accuse us of making a foundation without the royal approbation.

"Signor Targianni answered me very kindly that he was quite indifferent with regard to the whole proceeding, and that he would not interfere in the least. As I enclose his letter copied by Father Giuliano, you will be able to judge for yourself. Certain it is, that this member of the Council is pleased with our manner of life and the other items mentioned in my letter to him. But as he writes to me in the capacity of a minister of the king, using the royal seal, and superscribing 'Official', he writes somewhat re-

gone about the ruin of our house in the right way, namely, in alleging that we did not have the sanction of the king, and that we followed the teaching of the Jesuits.

Good God! How can it be said that we are propagating the doctrines of the Jesuits, when I, who have written so

servedly, though with sufficient clearness for one to divine his meaning. His reply has pleased Mgr. Lanza very much. At present, quiet is completely restored. At Palermo the people are undeceived, and everyone is speaking in the highest terms of the prelate. Cannella, abandoned by all, is in the hands of the Tribunal of the Holy Office to defend, if he can, his heretical propositions.

"Now that the criminality of Cannella is known, the people speak of his Lordship and myself in a very different strain. For six weeks, they have called after me: *Crucifige;* [Crucify him!] now they chant, *Hosanna*, and *Benedictus qui venit* [Blessed is he that cometh]! Their execration of us was changed into veneration, particularly after the exercises, which I conducted for the nobility of Girgenti, who came in crowds, and derived much fruit and satisfaction from them. *Digitus Dei est hic* [The finger of God is here]. It is, indeed, his pure goodness, and a tender proof of his special protection, for which I have thanked him, and shall thank him eternally, and I ask your Lordship to unite with me.

"I have been told that a brother of Cannella, a Capuchin, has written to your Lordship all manner of evil about me. Do not believe a word of it. God, the Defender of innocence, has brought the truth to light. He knows the prudence, disinterestedness, and caution I maintain in my relations with the bishop, and that I do not meddle in anything that does not pertain to my ministry. Vice wishes to triumph without opposition; but when there is question of faith, of religion, and of the common weal, every good Christian is a soldier of Jesus Christ.

"I intended to visit you after Easter, but his Lordship is unwilling that I should go just now, and I must obey. No more at present. I kiss your Lordship's hand, and on my knees, crave your blessing.

Your Lordship's

Most unworthy servant and son in Jesus Christ,

PIETRO PAOLO BLASUCCI,

GIRGENTI, April 12, 1772. of the Most Holy Redeemer."

much on these subjects, have expressly censured the teaching of the Jesuits in Moral and Dogmatic Theology? Shall we then be obliged to teach the doctrines of Jansenius, Quesnelle, and their followers? Let us be comforted, however, in seeing that God is protecting us.

Do not think of coming to Naples, since his Lordship does not wish it. The times are troublous. It will be better to wait for a more favorable opportunity. I have not received any letter from the Capuchin. If one comes, I shall answer it courteously, so as not to stir up the smouldering embers.

You do not tell me whether you received the books I sent you, namely, the *Sermons for Sundays*, and some other smaller works. I have finished my work on the *History of the Heresies*, including the refutation of the principal ones. This work has caused me to sweat blood and given me untold trouble with the *blessed* Canon Simioli, who holds tenaciously to the doctrine of Berti, and, consequently, cancelled many passages. At last, however, I secured the approbation; but the permission of the ministry has not been granted yet. We must wait until the Secretary de Marco,[1] who, as you know, has been very ill, and received

[1] In his humility the saint does not add the account of the part he himself took in the cure of Marquis de Marco. The following is taken from the deposition of Don Salvatore Romano in the process of beatification (*Summarium*, n. 31, § 125): "The servant of God was endowed with the gift of prophecy. On one occasion the Marquis de Marco was dangerously ill. My uncle, Don Michele Metillo di Monte Sarchio, a most intimate friend of the marquis, on hearing this, sent me a courier in haste, telling me to go at once to the servant of God and ask him in his name to recommend to the Almighty the Marquis de Marco, whose life was now despaired of by the physicians. I went, and having told my story to him, the servant of God was much affected. On the following morning at daybreak, he sent for me twice in haste. When I arrived at his palace, he spoke to me these very words: 'Get a courier quickly, I shall pay him, and write to Don Michele that Signor Carlo de

Extreme Unction, returns to business. As soon as the work is published, I shall send it to you through the Signori Consiglio, by the bark of Vietri. I am thinking of sending it to Signor Targianni also, and of thanking him for his kindness to you. From his letter it is easy to perceive that he has been favorably inclined. Had he opposed, he could certainly have ruined us. *Gloria Patri!* Blessed forever be Jesus and Mary, who protect us so lovingly!

Our friends say we are Jesuits to call down upon us the anger of the court. God bless them! Preach and publish it everywhere that we are opposed, and I more than all, to the teachings of the Jesuits. I speak of those doctrines which are not sound, for of their sound doctrines we cannot speak evil. In my *History of the Heresies* I have placed among the refutations, one, it is the last in the work, against Father Berruyer, who is a Jesuit; and I have scored him severely, because what he says is very dangerous to the faith. You will be pleased with this article when you read it. And not only have I scored Father Berruyer, but also all the other Jesuits who have undertaken his defence. I know that my refutation will give offence to many Jesuits, but that matters not to me. When there is question of the teachings of our holy religion, were my own father to say what was wrong, I would use severe language even of him.

Marco has passed an easy night, and will continue to get well, as Mgr. Lucci, the Bishop of Bovino, who loved him so much, has obtained this favor for him.' He then took two small pictures, one of the crucifixion, the other of our Lady, and said that they should be sent to the marquis, to be placed under his pillow, and that we should rest assured that the marquis would recover his health. The courier was despatched with the pictures, and in reply was told that on the same night on which the servant of God had said the above, the marquis had improved. He afterward recovered perfect health, as the servant of God had foretold."

Remember me kindly to his Lordship, and tell him that I am highly edified by his zeal. Good God, where are we! To teach poor young men that they must follow Jansenius and Quesnelle! To this pass have the learned of this enlightened age come! Enlightened age, indeed, and meanwhile souls are going to perdition! Naples is lost! No longer are the confessionals frequented, no more sermons, and everybody is talking theology, prating about Holy Scripture, and dogmas, and commandments!

I pray you to write more frequently, and especially to inform me of the affair of Signor Cannella and the Tribunal of the Holy Office. I think his writings are known to many. The bishop, I think, possesses a copy of them. If not, it would be well for him to procure one. I do not see, therefore, how Signor Cannella can escape the toils.

In your charity, do you all pray for me to Jesus Christ, that I may have a happy death. I have already one foot in the grave, and the duties of the episcopate are becoming too heavy for me.

I bless your Reverence and your Community one by one, and to each I recommend the observance of the Rule and the spirit of harmony among yourselves. Let us remember that we are surrounded by enemies who seek to destroy us here in Naples as in Girgenti. If we do not show ourselves faithful to God, we shall presently witness our total destruction. Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

Henceforward in writing to one another you shall not place on the envelope: *N. N. Rector, etc.*, in order not to give any pretext to our opponents. I shall warn the Vicar [Don Andrea Villani] to pursue the same course in writing to you.

BROTHER ALFONSO MARIA,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER, 255.

To Signor Giambattista Remondini.

He requests some copies of his works, and informs him of the royal approbation of the *History of the Heresies*. His resolution not to write any more works on scientific subjects.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, May 31, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: First of all let me ask you to send me thirty or forty copies of my dogmatic work against the Reformers, *The Council of Trent*. A person to whom I am under great obligations, has urgently asked me for it, and I have not been able to procure a copy in Naples, as they have all been sold.

Our Lord wished to mortify me by permitting that mistake on the part of your workmen. You thought you had sent me one hundred and fifty copies of the dogmatic work, whereas those that came were of the work on *Faith*. You need not have any doubts on the subject, for all the books have been examined time and again, and they are all on *Faith*. There is not even one copy of the dogmatic work among them.

Oblige me, then, by sending these copies as soon as you can, *via* Manfredonia, through Signor D. Oronzio Noe. Send me also fifty more copies of the *Exercises for a Retreat of Eight Days*, and *Reflections on the Passion*. Those you forwarded to me I sent to Naples to be bound. To my great grief, they were lost on the way. This is a golden little work. I make use of it myself every day. Inform me of the price of the dogmatic work, also of the latter copies, and I shall send it to you at once.

With regard to my *History of the Heresies*, another difficulty arose, and the permission of the court to publish it was not forthcoming; but, thanks be to God, only last

evening I received information that it has been granted. As soon as the *memorial* of the ministry is issued, I shall send you the book roughly bound. It comprises three small octavo volumes, but I have had it bound in one.

This work has cost me years of labor. I hope that it will prove very useful to the public, for it is on a subject never before treated. It has, indeed, caused me to sweat blood. This will be my last work, as I do not intend to write any more on scientific subjects. I do not want to have anything more to do with censors that have so tormented me. Should I publish any work in the future, it will be only of a devotional character, as is one I have already begun, entitled: *Thoughts on Eternity.* [1] Let what I have done suffice. I shall soon complete my seventy-seventh year, and it is time that I should begin to think only of death, which is upon me.

I am waiting for you to tell me the price of the "History of Philosophy", published in Lucca. I have received five volumes, and have nearly finished reading them. The bookseller, Signor Signori, told me that he would give me the sixth and last volume in May, and that this volume was given free of cost. But I have not yet received it. Kindly inform me of the amount I am to send you for the work.

I have received from Venice a beautiful little book, entitled: "Jesus Crucified, or an Explanation of the Mystery of the Passion", by Signor Cornaro, and printed at Bergamo. I have not been able to ascertain who sent it. I suspect it is to yourself that I am indebted for the favor. If so, let me know the price of this work, also.

To your future direction, I inform you that my secretary, Don Felice Verzella, has left me. He is no longer of my household. I tell you this, because I know that he frequently wrote to you concerning my affairs, but upon his own responsibility.

[1] It seems this work was never published.

I shall send you the *History of the Heresies* through Signor Moschini.

With deepest respect, I remain

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 256.

To the Same.

He sends him the *History of the Heresies.*

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, June 15, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: I send you herewith my work, *The History of the Heresies*, which has cost me many years of fatiguing labor. In my opinion it is a most useful book, not only for ecclesiastics, but for all classes of persons. I am speaking particularly of history; for in this work is comprised all that so many authors, ancient and modern, say in innumerable volumes. It contains everything in condensed form, yet not so condensed as is to be found in some miserable little books. Here is found in compendium the substance of the most important matters; and to do this has been my severe task. I trust, therefore, that it will be of great service to the public.

A certain Signor Giovanni Vitto has written to me saying that he printed my *Practice of Confessors*, that is, not the larger one, but the small one in one volume,[1] and also my *Letter on the Manner of Preaching.* He has sent me, moreover, twelve copies of the *Practice* and as many of the

[1] "Practice of the Confessor for the Worthy Exercise of his Ministry."

Letter, and he tells me that, having printed my *Practice*, he sold a thousand copies of it in a few days.

It struck me that this gentleman had written to me and sent this present with a view of receiving from me some new work to print. I have written to him, therefore, thanking him kindly for his present and his attention, saying at the same time that I should be glad to engage his services, but that I could not leave Signor Remondini, who has published all my works for so many years, and to whom I am under many obligations. I fear that my reply was not very much to his liking.

To come to the point. I have persuaded myself that you would not refuse to publish this new work on the *Heresies*. In fact, I believe you once expressed the desire to do so. But if, perhaps, you do not care about doing so, let me know, and I shall, with your approbation, give it to Signor Vitto. I write you this in all sincerity, for I do not wish to offend you.

Relieve my anxiety, I pray you, by informing me as soon as you receive this work.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] In case you publish this *History of the Heresies*, let the proof-reader be very attentive to the additions, which are few. Let the compositor, also, be extremely careful.

You will notice that in the second volume [chap. xii. art. 4], between pages 586 and 587, there is a loose sheet bearing this mark ––. It is a note to be placed at the bottom of page 586, at the end of the marginal number 173. The reference is to be marked by an asterisk. It would be well to print it in small type. Do not be surprised that it con-

tains so many erasures and omissions; notwithstanding all these, it is to be inserted just as it stands. It begins with the words: *Qui si aggiunge che dopo tante;*[1] then immediately follows the printed text, without considering that it has been crossed out with the pen; for the whole thing must be inserted.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 257.

To the Same.

He informs him of the forwarding of the work mentioned in the preceding letter, and gives some directions with regard to the printing. He asks for information on certain matters, and requests him to withhold the publication of the *Moral.*

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, June 15, 1772.[2]

Most Illustrious Sir: I have already forwarded my work, *The History of the Heresies, with their Refutation*, to Signor Moschini at Naples. It comprises three volumes small octavo. I hope it will please you, and that you will print it at once. This will be my last work, as I am now nearing my seventy-seventh year, and must think henceforward only of death. In case you should not wish to publish it, let me know.

Tell the compositor that in the second volume there is an addition, or rather a note, which is to be placed at the foot of the page in very small type and introduced by an asterisk. This note will be found at page 586 on a de-

[1] This long note was inserted, and may be seen in the stereotyped edition of Giacinto Marietti. p. 262 and 263.

[2] This letter bears the same date as the foregoing. One was sent by post, the other forwarded with the book.

tached sheet which contains in printed form all that is to constitute the foot-note in question. Do not mind that this sheet is covered with marks and almost entirely crossed out. It happened by mistake. The print is still very distinct, and one can easily make out what is to be inserted in the note. The proof-reader, however, must be very attentive. I say all this, that you may know how to proceed. You will receive, also, another letter of mine in the work which I have already sent to Signor Moschini.

I am waiting for information concerning the price of the "History of Philosophers", or "of Philosophy", a work published in Lucca, and of which I have already received five volumes. I am expecting the sixth, which the bookseller Signori of Naples tells me, is given free of cost. This same gentleman directed me to come to an understanding with you about the price. There were two sets sent, one for myself, and one for Don Felice Verzella, my former secretary.

Resuming my letter, I ask you to let me know whether or not you sent me that book on the "Passion of Jesus Christ", by Cornaro, Provost of Bergamo, which I received from Venice. I see that a certain Remondini sent it, but his Christian name is not the same as yours. If you know anything about the matter, inform me, that I may send him the price of the work, or, at least, thank him for his kindness.

I asked you also to send me at your convenience twenty or thirty copies of my dogmatic work on the *Council of Trent*. You did order your workmen to send them to me; but, unfortunately for me, they made a mistake and forwarded the work, entitled: *The Truth of Faith*. About this error, you need not entertain the least doubt, for the books have been examined carefully and repeatedly. They are all *Truth of Faith*, and not the dogmatic work. Furthermore, I wrote to you to send me at the same time fifty

more copies of the little book: *Exercises for a Retreat of Eight Days.* I promised to give a copy of the dogmatic work to a friend to whom I am under obligation, but I could not find one copy in Naples. They have all been sold.

I beg you to relieve my mind by letting me know when you receive the work on the *Heresies.* In the copy that I sent, you will find many manuscript notes not contained in the work as printed at Naples.

With sincerest esteem,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] I have still to inform you of a very important matter. I have been thinking of eliminating the text of Busenbaum from my *Moral Theology*, as this author has become extremely odious. Many, perhaps, do not care to purchase my work on account of the presence of his text —the reason, too, very likely, why my *Moral* was prohibited in Portugal. I ask you, therefore, to withhold the publication of the work, for I wish to suppress this author's text. To do this, as well as to arrange the order of the treatises so that there may be no confusion, some time will be required.

The last copies of the *Moral* which you sent to Naples are, I understand, all disposed of. It would be well, therefore, to send more copies if you have the opportunity. You might forward them with the dogmatic work and the *Exercises.*

I shall not send you the *History of the Heresies* this week, as I have to write to Naples for the title-page and

the indexes, which are still wanting. I shall forward it next week.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 258.

To the Same.

He speaks of the worth of the *History of the Heresies*, also of his resolution of recasting the *Moral*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, July 12, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: Several weeks ago I wrote to you, but have received no answer. I have also forwarded the *History of the Heresies, with their Refutation*, a work in three volumes octavo, to Signor Moschini, who tells me that he is only waiting for an opportunity to send it to you. I hope this work will meet the favor of the public, more, perhaps, than any of my previous writings; for it is a unique work, a compendious history in three volumes, compiled from many large tomes by greater authors who have treated these matters. Among all the books that I had to consult in composing it, the Church has none like this work of mine.

In the copy that I sent you, there are some very beautiful notes in manuscript, not contained in the work as printed at Naples. This Neapolitan edition has already been offered for sale and there is great demand for it.

Set my mind at rest, I pray you, by informing me at once when you receive the work from Moschini.

What follows interests me most at present: some months ago you told me that you intended to publish a new edition of

my *Moral.* In reply I wrote to you several weeks ago to have the reprinting discontinued, as I wanted to eliminate from the work the text of Busenbaum. Now, however, that I have thought over the matter more maturely, I tell you that, if the text of this author were suppressed, the whole work would be confused. I should be obliged to compose a new *Moral*, a task that would require more than five or six years of labor. I am not in a condition to do this at my advanced age of seventy-seven years. It would be utter foolishness for me to undertake it in my present state.

Should you, nevertheless, wish to begin this new edition and add the latest notes which I have sent you, I pray you to inform me of the fact though you should be obliged to write again and again; for I have many important things to be inserted. These additions are not very long, but they are of the highest moment and belong to the beginning of the work. I should, therefore, be extremely annoyed if the new edition were to appear without these additions, or rather, these corrections, which I have already prepared. I have only to set them in order. At a word from you, I shall forward them. I expect an answer on this matter at once, together with the pleasure of seeing a line from you, for a long time has elapsed since I last heard from you.

With sincerest respect, I am

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 259.

To the Same.

He condoles with him in his great misfortune, and promises the assistance of Masses and prayers. He is sorry that his health prevents him from attending better to the sale of the publisher's books.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, July 15, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: I was very much rejoiced to see again, after so long an interval, your handwriting in the letter just received, though deeply grieved to learn of the affliction that has befallen you.[1]

I can already imagine what it is to have anything to do with the ministry of the Republic. I assure you, I feel your misfortune as much as if it were my own. You need not fear that Masses and prayers will be wanting. This morning I said Mass for this intention. I shall say some more myself, have them said by others also, and have alms distributed. Moreover, I shall recommend this matter to two convents of nuns of excellent spirit, and particularly to the one founded by myself in Sant' Agata five or six

1 In lack of more definite information we think that this affliction was none other than the one related to a Father of the Congregation, in 1875, by a venerable octogenarian who had at one time been a secretary in the family of Remondini. "In his famous establishment," said the good old man, "Remondini had printed a beautiful cut representing the Church. Beneath was placed a large gate bearing the arms of Spain, and above were the words: *Portæ inferi non prævalebunt adversus eam.* [The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.] The Spanish government was so incensed at this, that with serious menaces they demanded the life of Remondini of the Venetian Republic. The matter was made the subject of diplomatic relations, several persons of distinction taking part therein. But not until the death of the principal adversary of Remondini, did the prosecution cease.

years ago.[1] This convent is the abode of saints, of perfect Community-life, and exact observance. I shall write to the nuns this very evening to make a special novena to the Madonna for this intention. I shall write, also, to the Fathers of my Congregation to make another novena. Let us place our confidence in Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin. I trust the tempest will subside, or, at least, turn out less severe than it threatens. For my consolation I pray you to keep me informed of the progress of events.

I shall write to Signor Oronzio Noe at Manfredonia to send me the package of books you mention, namely, the copies of the *Sermons for Sundays*, and of the work against the so-called Reformers. I thank you sincerely for this two-fold present, as well as for the copy of Reclusio's "De potestate parochi".

With regard to the "History of Philosophy", published at Lucca, I am waiting to learn the price which I am to send. The bookseller Signori promised to let me have the sixth volume in May, but I have not received it yet. I should be very sorry to have my copy remain incomplete.

A few days ago I wrote to you that I had forwarded the *History of the Heresies* to Signor Moschini, and that he was awaiting a favorable opportunity to send it to you.

I shall do all in my power to dispose of the *Sermons* and the one hundred copies of the work against the Reformers. But I do not visit Naples any more. Since my last sickness I cannot travel; I can hardly stand on my feet. It is with difficulty that I say Mass. On the other hand, the priests of my diocese are not very fond of buying books. I am sorry that I cannot, therefore, sell all the copies you have sent me, as I should wish; still I shall do what I can. I should earnestly wish, as I think I wrote to you in previous letters, that you would enter into closer mercantile relations

[1] The convent of the nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer, or Redemptoristines.

with some booksellers of Naples; for they can dispose of your books better than I. However, as I say, I shall do what lies in my power.

With the expression of sincerest regard, I remain

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 260.

To the Same.

The saint's interest in Remondini. He explains at length his reasons for not making a certain change in the *Moral*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, July 30, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: I am in receipt of your letter of the 18th instant. From it I learn to my great satisfaction, that you have been notified by Signor Moschini with regard to my work, *The History of the Heresies*, which he has on hand.

I have already written to Signor Oronzio Noe to forward to me the package of books of the dogmatic work. As soon as I receive it, I shall let you know.

With regard to the "History of Philosophy", published at Lucca, the bookseller, Signori of Naples, tells me that he will give me the last volume next month. Meanwhile, I learn from your letter that the amount due the bookseller at Lucca is thirty-two *lire*, four grains. This amount I shall transfer to your account. I am now waiting to learn the price of the last volume, though it seems to me that Signori says this volume is free. However, I am willing to pay for it if necessary.

I eagerly expected some news about the difficulties in

which you were placed, as I learned from your last letter. As you mention nothing of the matter in your present letter, I console myself with the hope that the storm has passed. Still I wish you would give me in your next letter a detailed account and relieve my anxiety as to whether the fury of the tempest has spent itself, and how things are at present. I have commended the affair in a particular manner to our dear Lord, and I have said many Masses, that the Almighty would grant you his consolation. Moreover, I have given alms to the amount of twenty *carlini* to three convents of saintly nuns, among them that of the Capuchin nuns at Naples, of the strict observance of St. Clare. I have asked them to make a novena of prayers for this affliction of yours which I have so deeply at heart.

You have written to me that I might distribute alms to the amount of fifteen ducats for your intention; but I have not spent more than six ducats, as I have said above. I renew my request to let me know how matters stand; for, if necessary, I shall have more novenas and prayers offered.

You also write about my design of eliminating Busenbaum from the *Moral*. I did, indeed, entertain the idea, as I wrote you, and God knows how many times I have repented of not having from the beginning made the *Moral* my own, without using Busenbaum at all. In my last letter, however, I think I told you that the thing would be impossible. I did intend to make the projected alteration; and, in fact, began work on one of the treatises, omitting the text of Busenbaum altogether. But I soon perceived that the elimination of this author's text left the work like a body wanting here and there an important member; in short, I constructed a work incomplete and confused. In making my commentaries on Busenbaum, I followed the text and cases given by him. To eliminate them would destroy my *Moral*. I should, consequently, have to begin

anew, and change the entire plan of the work; for many things belonging to the first treatise would have to be transferred to the third or the sixth. Though I spent many weeks in arranging the treatise alluded to, which is one of the easiest, I did not accomplish the half of my task. From this, I should judge that, if I were in the same manner to compose and arrange all the treatises in the three volumes of the *Moral*, five or six years, to make a low estimate, would not be sufficient. To write the *Moral* as it now stands, required fifteen years or more. I have, therefore, thought it rash to undertake at my advanced age of seventy-seven, a task of five or six years' labor, especially as I now have the cares of the episcopate upon me. I am so crippled in my hands and feet that I cannot write a line. I can scarcely write my own name, and this after having written the greater part, not to say nearly the whole, of the *Moral* with my own hand. Again, I would not be satisfied to let others write these matters unless I dictated them; for there is question of sin and, consequently, of something delicate and important. Let me repeat, then, that I see it would be rash for me to undertake to recast the *Moral*, and others have only confirmed my opinion.

Indeed, my *Moral Theology* has been sold in all parts. What does it matter that out of hatred for the Jesuits, they have prohibited it in Portugal? In Naples no work on Moral Theology has had a sale equal to mine, despite a prophet's not being accepted in his own country. Moreover, at least in the late editions of my work, the name of Busenbaum has been entirely suppressed.[1] Besides, every-

[1] The name of Busenbaum, whose text the saint followed, appeared on the title-page of the *Moral* down to the fifth edition. As appears from this *Correspondence*, the saint would have wished to set him aside altogether; but, prevented from doing so for the reasons here given, he contented himself with dropping the name from the

one may see that in comparison with my notes, Busenbaum's text forms only a very small part of the work.

I repeat, the *Moral* in its present form has been well received; even now it is sought for and sells well. If it were to be changed, we do not know whether it would meet with a like good fortune among the people.

I wrote to you that, if, as you told me, you intend to publish a new edition, and for which I sent you several important little additions, I had some other very necessary notes to be inserted, or rather, certain points to be changed. When, therefore, you begin the reprinting, let me know a little beforehand, that I may be enabled to arrange these matters. The points in question are many and of great importance, and I should be extremely disappointed, if the new edition of the *Moral* were to appear without having them corrected. I do not think you will refrain from publishing the new edition because I cannot recast the work as I had intended. As I wrote you, this new *Moral* would be something impossible for me, and the present work still continues to be sold and sought after on all sides. Indeed, it would be difficult to find nowadays a *Moral* so replete with instruction, ancient and modern, as mine is. In Naples, it has been published in four volumes for the convenience of clerical students. This edition, however, gives me little or no satisfaction. Still I have noticed that the editor, though of the Rigorist School and, consequently, opposed to my System, which is neither Rigorism nor Jesuit, but between the two, calls me, nevertheless, in one place: "the most learned Liguori". I have no pretension to being most learned, but I perceive that my opponents

title-page, in order to avoid the persecution which the name of Jesuit would call forth against his work.

praise my work and use it. Fear not, therefore. The new edition will continue to have the same sale as previous ones.

With the expression of sincere esteem,

I remain

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] Do not fail, I pray you, to answer this letter as soon as possible with regard to the new edition, and also the trouble through which you have passed, an affair which causes me much anxiety.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 261.

To Father Pietro Paolo Blasucci, Superior of the House at Girgenti.

He composes a clear and concise abridgment of his *Moral System* for the use of the Fathers at Girgenti, that all may profess uniform doctrine.—The damage brought about by Jansenism.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

ARIENZO, August 5, 1772.

Last evening I received three letters from you. Once for all, I will not write to Targianni; he is, as I have been informed by a learned man from Lucca, one of those who speak against the Probable Opinion, without knowing what is meant by *probable*, *more probable*, or *most probable*.

Do not cease to proclaim that I and all the Fathers of the Congregation are Probabiliorists.[1] This is, indeed, the

[1] See Letter 185 of March 28, 1767, vol. iv. (*Special Correspondence*), p. 363, note.

truth; for I maintain that the Probable Opinion as such cannot be followed, since to act well, moral certitude is required. Mere probability, therefore, is not sufficient foundation on which to base the rectitude of an action.

And this, though I have not expressed myself in these words, I have, nevertheless, explained in equivalent terms, when I repeatedly declare that to perform a morally good act, moral certitude is necessary, and when I reject as utterly false the maxim of the Probabilists: *Qui probabiliter agit, prudenter agit.* [He who acts with probability, acts wisely.] As I say, I have not clothed my teaching in these express terms, but in the new edition of the *Moral*, which Remondini is about to publish, I shall explain myself in unmistakable language. When the opinion in favor of liberty is equally probable, this opinion may be followed, not because it is probable, but because in that case the opinion in favor of the law does not bind, since the law is not promulgated. It is the doubt, or the question whether the law exists, that is promulgated, but not the law itself; consequently, the law, not being sufficiently promulgated, does not bind, as St. Thomas teaches in a number of passages, and as all the Probabilists and Probabiliorists say. The learned Gerson, also, says that God cannot oblige man to obey a law if it is not made known to him. I beseech your Reverence to have this paragraph read to all our Fathers, that we may follow the same doctrine.

It is true that, as your letter informs me, we cannot use this language in Sicily, as they are Tutiorists there. *Ipsi videant!* [Let them be responsible!] What afflicts me is the poor souls that are lost. O God, what miserable times! Jansenism is spreading everywhere. A professor of the archiepiscopal seminary said to me recently: "True, the propositions of Jansenius are condemned; but why are we to believe that Jansenius maintained them in the sense in

which they have been condemned?" And he added that this sentiment is shared in by others at Naples. What beautiful language after the Sovereign Pontiff, as I have mentioned in the *History of the Heresies*, when speaking of Jansenism, has declared in two Bulls that the propositions are condemned in the sense in which Jansenius understood them!

I bless your Reverence and the rest, and embrace you all in Jesus Christ.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 262.

To a Priest.

He replies to some objections to certain passages in the *History of the Heresies*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

[ARIENZO, August, 1772.]

Reverend Sir: First of all, I send you a copy of my *History of the Heresies*, that you may defend me when occasion offers.

With regard to what you write to me in the name of Father Don Gennaro Fatigati, I admit in the first place that the passage at page 851, of the third volume, does, indeed, seem to say that, under the Old Law, evil desires were not forbidden. I have already noticed this and perceived that the words are capable of sinister interpretation. I have, therefore, had a sheet printed purposely to insert at the end of the book as a correction.

Indeed, even students know that the moral precepts were the same in the Old Law as in the New, and this point I have explained at greater length at number 7, page 837. In the list of corrections it is worded thus: "In the Old Law punishment was attached to sins of external act only;

wherefore many of the Jews, etc." I do not know how these words became confused, for this is what the passage intended to express, as may be seen from the fact that the punishment is designated. I do not understand, I say, how this error occurred, unless by a mistake of the compositor. However, it has been corrected in the supplementary sheet.

I sincerely thank Signor Fatigati and yourself, also, for the other matters to which he has called my attention; but after a careful examination, I think there is no need of further supplement or explanation. Were I to explain in detail all the many points I have brought together in the *Refutations*, I should have to make four or five volumes more to clear up all the obscurities and misunderstandings that might arise in the minds of my readers.

I say, then, first, that there is not in the whole of theology one single proposition, howsoever carefully enunciated it may be, that evil minds cannot distort into a false meaning.

Again, many things must be understood from their connection with other matters treated in the book.

And lastly, words are to be taken in the sense of the principal topic under discussion, and in connection with the objections that they are to answer.

Having premised these three points, I shall briefly reply to your remarks on pages 814 and 815.

Your first exception is to what the book says: "The motions which precede consent are at most only venial sins, when we neglect to banish them from the mind as soon as we perceive them. It is only the consent to the desire of a grievous wrong that is a mortal sin." Your objection is: given that such motions are adverted to, we must see whether there is any complacency taken in them or desire. These, complacency and desire, do not precede consent, but they involve it (*ma lo tengono imbibito*).

So too, you say, not only the simple consent to an evil

desire is a grave sin, but complacency in the evil desire likewise. This objection, however, is not in place here, for it confounds complacency with desire. Here in this first passage objected to, I am not speaking of complacency, but of evil desire only, that is, of the commandment *non concupisces*, and I am dealing with Calvin (this is the topic under discussion), who maintains that it is impossible to observe this commandment of not having evil desires.

There is no doubt that complacency in an evil object involves the consent. But this is not the case with desire when the consent is wanting; otherwise, even the desire though banished, would be mortal sin—I mean by the desire the thought of the evil, though banished from the mind.

You say in your letter that the desire, as well as the complacency in a wicked object involves the consent. With regard to complacency I shall answer presently. As to the desire, we must distinguish between the desire of the flesh and the desire of the will. When the desire is of the will, it certainly involves the consent; but not when the desire is solely of the flesh, or of the sinful appetite, and the will opposes it.

Let us now consider the complacency; for until now I have been speaking of desire, and not of complacency. You object, in the second place, to what is said at page 815, namely: "If a person adverting to an evil desire, consents thereto or takes pleasure in it, he surely renders himself guilty of a sin grievous or venial." Here your objection is: given that the evil desire is adverted to, it is always a mortal sin, whether consent is given or pleasure taken in dwelling upon it, and it makes no difference whether we distinguish between complacency in an evil object or complacency in the thought of an evil object; for complacency in the thought of an evil object is a grievous sin just as well as complacency in an evil object itself, since *su-*

mit malitiam ab objecto cogitato, et imbibit naturam objecti.

To this objection I shall let St. Thomas answer. In my *Moral* this quotation from St. Thomas is abbreviated, but here it is necessary to insert it entirè. In *1. 2, quæst. 74 a. 8 in corp.*, he speaks as follows: *Sic igitur aliquis, de fornicatione cogitans, de duobus potest delectari: uno modo de ipsa cogitatione, alio modo de ipsa fornicatione cogitata. Delectatio de cogitatione sequitur inclinationem affectus in cogitationem ipsam; cogitatio autem ipsa, secundum se, non est peccatum mortale; imo quandoque est veniale tantum, puta cum aliquis inutiliter cogitat de ea; quandoque autem sine peccato omnino, puta cum aliquis utiliter de ea cogitat, sicut cum vult de ea prædicare vel disputare, et ideo delectatio, quæ sic est de cogitatione fornicationis, non est de genere peccati mortalis, sed quandoque est peccatum veniale, quandoque nullum. Unde nec consensus in talem delectationem est peccatum mortale.*

What St. Thomas says needs no explanation. I only wish you to note the concluding words: *nec consensus in talem delectationem est peccatum mortale.* Wherefore the consent to the complacency taken not in the object, but in the thought of the object, according to St. Thomas, *non sumit malitiam objecti mali.* This doctrine is taught also by the Probabiliorists, as Cuniliati, *de Pecc. cap. i.* § *7, n. 7*, Antoine, *de Pecc. c. 6*, § *2*, Stampò in his *Moral Theology* for the use of the clergy, recently published, *de Pecc. c. 7*, § *2*. Others I pass over in silence.

You say further that in my *Moral* I have not added the words: *cum abominatione objecti.* But St. Thomas does not make this addition, and in truth it was not necessary for me to do so. I hold as certain the doctrine of St. Thomas that complacency in the mere thought of the object is not a mortal sin.

With regard to the restriction: *nisi absit periculum prox-*

imum consensus, this is, indeed, in place in the *Moral*, but not in the passage in question; for here my purpose is to refute Calvin, who asserts that it is impossible to observe the commandment *non concupisces*.

There are in your letter some other doubts brought forward which, I think, are without foundation. To answer adequately would require me to write at length, but I think I can easily spare myself this trouble. Still I thank you for your remarks, and I thank, also, my esteemed friend Don Gennaro Fatigati, who has had you to write to me not in the spirit of criticism, but rather to shield me from the criticism of others. I beseech you to tell him from me that a writer should try to escape well-founded and merited criticism; for, to avoid all criticism and all the misinterpretations that come into the minds of people, is impossible. Enough that every proposition can be rightly explained in a good sense. It is impossible to close every avenue by which statements may be distorted to a bad sense, and to satisfy everyone: this one wants such a limitation, that one, another; one wants this word explained, another that.

With regard to what you say about adding the clause: "after sin has been committed" to the words: "Man is composed of body and soul, which naturally are at war with each other",—because someone might conclude therefrom that it is in the very nature of man to feel this struggle against reason, I answer, first, that here I am speaking of nature in its fallen state; secondly, in the opinion which admits the possibility of the state of *natura pura* against those who deny this possibility, because then we should have to admit that God had placed this opposition of the spirit to the flesh in the very nature of man, it is claimed that this struggle would not be a vice or a fault, but only a condition of human nature. And the opinion admitting the possibility of *natura pura* is well nigh the

common one. Bellarmine, Estius, Sylvius, Cajetan, and a hundred others are its patrons. St. Augustine teaches it without any equivocation, and St. Bernard says: "Which are the two feet? That these motions are felt, and that they are consented to; the former is natural, the latter is criminal. "Serm. in illud Sap: *Sapientia vincit malitiam.*" See what I have written on this in number 13, page 902. [Refutation xii.]

Father Fatigati, I know, has written all this out of regard for me, and I thank him sincerely for it.

I have nothing more to say. Present my respects to this worthy priest, and recommend me to Jesus Christ.

With the expression of highest esteem,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After an old copy.

LETTER 263.

To Signor Giambattista ..emondini.

On account of age and infirmity, he will not write any more scientific works.—Renewed protestations of his regard for the publisher.—The new edition of the *Moral* and the additions to be made to it.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, August 20, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have learned with pleasure that you have received my work, *The Triumph of the Church.* This work has cost me years of labor, and it is the last of my life, since I would not venture to work long at the time at my advanced age. I am in my declining years. In a month I shall have attained my seventy-seventh year. My health is entirely shattered, my feet no longer support me. I spend my time in bed or stretched upon a sofa, and my

head does not serve me as it did in days gone by. I have, therefore, come to the determination not to write any more scientific works.[1] I shall write works of devotion only, as I am doing at present, being engaged on the Passion.[2] I have collected some excellent things on this subject, and to it I shall add other small works on spirituality.

I say this in connection with the publication of the *Triumph*, as I am afraid you have become weary of publishing my works. I, indeed, owe you an immense debt of thanks for what you have done. For myself I have not had anything printed for the sake of gain. It has frequently happened that after printing my works here in Naples, I have disposed of them for less than they cost me. If I had them printed here, it was only that I might be able to review them the first time myself, and expunge and insert many passages. Had it not been for this, I should have sent them to you in the very beginning. I thank you most sincerely for all your labor, for through your instrumentality my poor books have received an extensive publication.

Of the package you mention, I have received no news as yet. Signor Noe has not even answered my letter. I shall write to him again without delay.

You say that, when you have completed the *Triumph*, you will send me some copies. I thank you for this, as well as for the many valuable presents of the kind you have most generously made me of all your editions. But let me

[1] The saint was unable to carry out this resolution; for prompted by the zeal that always glowed strongly in his breast to procure by every means the glory of God and the salvation of souls, he again and again took up his pen, as we shall see presently, to treat of scientific matters. His works: "The Admirable Conduct of Divine Providence in Saving Man through Jesus Christ", "An Explanation of the Author's System on the Rule of Moral Actions", etc., are examples in point.

[2] "Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ, and other Spiritual Subjects, explained for Pious Souls."

ask you once more not to send any copies for sale. My priests are not very fond of books, and I have no means of selling them. Father Ferrara is dead, and there is no one like him among the other Fathers for this work. God only knows the tempest through which our Congregation is passing.[1]

Speaking of Signor Giovanni Vitto, I fancied he might be a former workman of yours. However, he did not ask any work of me. Had he done so, his request would have been in vain, for I would not break off connections with you in favor of any printing establishment in the world, although at present, as I have just said, I am able to do very little.

In your letter you again mention Busenbaum. In a preceding letter, which I hope you have received, I wrote you in detail, that to eliminate Busenbaum from the *Moral* would amount to making a complete jumble of the entire work. I should have to begin anew, change the arrangement, and transfer from one chapter what I have said in another. This would be a task of, at least, five or six years, working as I did in the beginning eight or nine hours daily. It would be downright folly for me in my present state of health to wish to undertake this gigantic work, for which three or four persons would be required.

My *Moral*, as it now stands, has been selling and is still selling everywhere. It is so popular in Naples that no other sells so readily.

As you are about to print the *Triumph*, I send you the enclosed sheet containing some words that are to be changed

[1] He alludes to the war made upon the Congregation by Baron Sarnelli. At this time it had become more dangerous by reason of the accusations made against us to the government by malcontents of Sicily.

at page 815 of the third volume. This change is necessary in order to avoid misinterpretation.

With sentiments of profound respect, I remain

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] I send you, also, some notes for the second volume. I have just received another letter from you, from which I am pleased to learn that you agree with me about leaving the *Moral* as it is, adding only the notes that I recently sent you. As the first folios of the new edition are already printed, I intend to compose a *Monitum* to be placed at the end of the work, after the index.[1] It is begun, and I shall forward it as soon as finished.

I send you, also, two other papers of additions; one in particular is very important, and is to be inserted in the *Moral* in place of a contradiction that I must correct.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

[1] This long *Monitum* is to be found at the end of the seventh edition, after the index, vol. iii. p. 201. It bears the title: "Auctoris Monitum pertinens ad quæstionem: an usus probabilium opinionum sit vel ne licitus aliquando." The reason for its strange position is, that it did not arrive in time to be printed in the body of the volume, as the saint wished. It is of so great importance and of such moment that without changing a single word in it, the saint in a subsequent edition, made it the introductory to a dissertation written to establish and defend what he truly calls his *Moral System.*

LETTER 264.

To the Same.

He promises him further assistance in the renewed persecution against him, and speaks at length of the *Monitum* to be introduced into the *Moral*, and of some corrections and additions for the *Homo Apostolicus*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, September 7, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: From your last letter I perceive that the unjust persecution against you has broken out afresh, although not with so great violence. I trust, God will defend your innocence. I shall say three Masses for you myself, shall direct others, also, to say Masses, and have the novenas renewed in the convents. Let us place the whole affair in the hands of our dear Lord.

A word now with regard to the *Addition*, or rather, *Monitum*, that is to be inserted in the *Moral*. As the printing of the new edition had already begun, in order not to interfere with the *Dissertation* that stands at the beginning,[1] and which would have to be entirely recast and rearranged if I wished to join to it the large *Addition* I had prepared, I have concluded to place this *Addition* with the title *Monitum* at the end of the work, after the last table of contents. If it were placed at the beginning, in the midst of the many things already found there, it would be of no use, since it belongs to the *Dissertation* just printed. Again, if it were placed before the index, it would escape the eye of the reader, who, as a rule, turns to the end of the book to find out anything new.

But I do not send you this *Addition*, or *Monitum*, at present, because it is of very great importance to me, since it places my *System of Probabilism* in a clear light, and

[1] "Dissertatio de usu moderato opinionis probabilis."

serves as the foundation to my entire *Moral*. As it is so very delicate a matter, in which one ill-chosen word could destroy the whole work, I have determined to make it perfect, and print it here in Naples so as to be able to review it myself, and arrange whatever may need correction in the proof-sheets. I have had it copied three times, adding several notes each time. To have it reach you complete and without any additions, I am having it printed separately, though apart from the *Moral* to which it belongs it is worth little. This is the last work I shall do on the *Moral*. It has cost me a month's labor. I had to copy it so often that this morning I am ill with fever in consequence. The fact that it is my last work on the *Moral*, is the reason I am so anxious to have it perfect. I shall leave the printed *Dissertation* untouched. It contains many things that I refer to in the *Monitum*.

I hope I shall be able to send this *Monitum* in a week or two. I shall forward it by post, as it would not be safe to entrust it to the courier.

I call your attention once more to the notes for the *Moral* which I sent you. They are matters of importance. If you suspect that any have been lost, let me know, and I shall send you copies of them.

Among others was the following, which might give occasion to one or the other government to prohibit the book. On page 195 of the first volume, number 615, question 1, after the first two lines, are the words: *Possunt etiam* [*tributa imponere*] *Concilia et Pontifex, ex potestate indirecta disponendi de temporalibus, quando id opus est ad regimen spirituale.* All this must be entirely omitted, and simply what follows: *Ita communiter, etc.*, inserted.

You do not say whether you received my last letter, in which I sent you some additions, or corrections to be inserted in the *History of the Heresies*, now in press, as you inform me. If a part of the work has been printed without

these corrections, let me know, and I shall send them on a separate sheet which I had printed here. This you might insert at the end of the last book in the third volume, as I have done in the edition published at Naples.

There are, also, some slight mistakes which I perceived later. They do not make any difference. Thus in the first volume, page 61, line 2, at the beginning the summary has *St. Alexander:* it should be *St. Athanasius.* On page 65, same volume, the last line reads: *e parte battere;* it should read: *e parte fatta battere.* A little further on, line 17, page 66, "At these words, Constan" should be "at these words, Constantine". These are, I say, only trifles; but the additions that I sent you were very important, and I should like to know whether you have received them.

Should you intend to publish the *Homo Apostolicus* again, I beg you to inform me of the fact beforehand; for I must change a number of things in it, particularly what is said in the beginning of the first volume, chapter iii. page 7, number 22, *De conscientia probabili.* What I say there must be changed according to what I have written in the *Monitum* mentioned in the preceding.

Relieve my anxiety by letting me know how your affair with the government is progressing. With sentiments of most profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 265.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

The same subject.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, October 19, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: I reply to your letter of the 3d instant. Rest assured, I shall continue to pray our good Lord to free you entirely from the present persecution. I have already taken a note of all the alms expended, and shall send it to you in due time. I did not expend the amount you told me, as I did not deem it necessary.

I thought that in your last letter, you would inform me of the receipt of the *Monitum*. I trust you have received it by this time, and I beg you to give me some news concerning it, as I am extremely anxious to have it appear in the *Moral*, and be read by the people. I repeat my request, that you insert it at the end of the work, as it will be thus found more easily. I have had a few copies printed here to present to certain persons. They have been literally snatched from my hands, and others are still eagerly sought after. This *Monitum* is short, but it is all pith, all marrow. In narrow compass, it clears up all doubts raised on this subject.

I understand you with regard to the additions already inserted in the *Moral*, and the omission of such points as could cause confusion. Let me know how far the printing of the *History of the Heresies* is advanced. It is very popular here.

As to the *Homo Apostolicus* and the few small additions that should be inserted, I pray you to let me know when you intend to publish a new edition of the work. I shall then collect these matters and send them to you. At present, I am occupied with other work.

It strikes me that I have several times asked you to send me three or four copies of *Sermons for Sundays*, which was printed by you. I wished to have this work containing the notes I had forwarded to you. Up to the present, however, you have not said a word about them. Pray, answer my letter, and send me those three or four copies when opportunity offers.

I have already told you that I received the package from Manfredonia. I have sent the books to be bound.

With sentiments of profound respect,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 266.

To Signor Giambattista Remondini.

He informs him of the receipt of the *Sermons for Sundays*, and praises the edition. He speaks of the other works at which he is working as his health permits.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

ARIENZO, October 29, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: I reply to your letter of the 17th instant. First of all, I beg you to pardon my mistake in asking you for two or three copies of *Sermons for Sundays*. My secretary tells me just now that you had already sent me twenty-five copies. I thought that I had not one. I examined the package and found the twenty-five copies together with the others which you sent for sale. The edition is beautiful, the type good, the paper excellent. I

am very thankful to you for this, and I shall do all in my power to further the sale.

I am sorry that they have already published a new edition here in Naples. I shall inform the booksellers that your edition contains many notes not to be found in the Neapolitan reprint.

I am glad to learn that you received the *Monitum*. I was very anxious in regard to it.

In a few days, I expect some Fathers of my Congregation here, and I shall take counsel with them as to the best means of selling all your publications, which I have preserved in a special room. I am sorry that I am so disabled and cannot go to Naples. If I went, I should speak with some of the booksellers about a more speedy way of effecting the sale. I should endeavor to induce someone of them to purchase the whole lot or, at least, a large part of them on his own account. The booksellers find ways of disposing of books when they choose; but when not selling them on their own account, they easily become disgusted with the work. But enough, I shall try to do my best.

At present, I am working upon the book on the *Passion*.[1] To it are to be joined two other little works, one of which I have already completed; the other is about half-finished. But I cannot work eight or ten hours a day, as I once did, partly on account of my advanced age, and partly because of my sickness. I am obliged to ride out morning and afternoon for a little exercise, as I cannot walk on account of my paralysis. The physicians have ordered this, in order to preserve my life a little longer. I try not to lose a moment, however, when I can steal a little time from the affairs of the episcopate.

I am daily expecting death. I have received Holy Viaticum four times, and Extreme Unction twice. I do not

1 "Pious Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ."

forget to pray for you, that you may continue in good health, and be successful in all your undertakings, chiefly in the great affair of eternal salvation.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 267.

To the Same.

His joy at the completion of the seventh edition of the *Moral*. He recommends the publication of the *History of the Heresies*, sending an addition which is to be inserted.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, November 17, 1772.

Most Illustrious Sir: I reply to your letter of the 9th instant. I am pleased to learn from it that the *Moral* has been published with the notes, and that the *Monitum* has been placed at the end as I requested. For all this, I thank you most heartily.

Yes, I have received all the copies of *Sermons for Sundays* and of the dogmatic work in good order. I am now racking my brain, and consulting with others as to the best manner of selling your copies. It is too bad I cannot go to Naples to speak in person with the booksellers on the matter. I am thinking of getting some one to go about the kingdom selling them. If a suitable person were found, one that understands this business and is trustworthy, I think we should dispose of all in a short time. But I am afraid of being cheated. I shall do what I can. Our

amiable booksellers here at Naples are, for the most part, a set of beggars, and will take up no books but their own.

I trust you will soon begin to print the *History of the Heresies*, of which I have received some high encomiums from Lucca. I send you herewith a small slip, and beg you to have it fastened with a wafer at the place to which it belongs, namely, the top of page 628, of the third volume. It is not a note of any kind to be inserted, but merely these two words: *più Dei*, which are to be omitted in order to avoid any ambiguity that might seem to exist. I pray you to attach this little slip in its proper place at once. For a long time, I had it prepared to send to you, and I should be very much annoyed if the work were published without this correction.[1]

Above all, let me entreat you not to omit publishing this work; for in my opinion, it is truly remarkable. I have labored at it faithfully for several years, in order to make it clear and concise, and I was assisted in my labor by two very learned persons. Upon the subject treated, I am certain that there is not a book like it; for it is a compendium of what many writers, ancient and modern, have said upon the matter.

I agree to your arrangement concerning the *Homo Apostolicus*. However, do not forget to inform me without delay when you are going to publish a new edition. The copies of this work have met with the best sale here.

[1] Before this correction was made, the passage cited read, as follows, in the Neapolitan edition: "If the Christians did not firmly believe in the divinity of the three Divine Persons they would have answered the Gentiles that they only considered the Father as God, and not the other two Persons; but they did not answer thus. They professed constantly and without the fear of admitting a plurality of Gods (*più Dei*) that the Son and the Holy Ghost were God equally with the Father."

I shall continue to pray, and have prayers said for the complete cessation of the persecution against you. Meanwhile, I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] I perceive from your letter that, when an opportunity offers, you will send me some copies of the work [*History of the Heresies*] as a present. I thank you sincerely for this as I have always done, seeing that you are so profuse in your gifts to me. But I pray you not to send many copies for sale. Do not increase my anxiety at beholding so many of your publications piled up around me without my being able to sell them. It will be sufficient to send me about twenty-five copies to be sold; for I shall see that these are disposed of here in my diocese. If, later on, I receive further requests for them, I shall notify you to send them.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 268.

To the Same.

He proposes an advantageous means of selling the books on hand; and after explaining the motive which guided him in all his writings, he anxiously asks why the publisher does not wish to print his ascetical works and the *History of the Heresies*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, January 31, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: Some days ago I received information from the Brother of our Congregation at Naples that, acting upon the advice I gave him, he had found among the booksellers there an honest and trustworthy man who

would take all the publications you have sent me to be sold, but that he would like to receive a consideration—in my opinion, one of no small importance. Still I beg of you to reflect that in my possession your works can have only a tardy sale. Having lost Father Ferrara, who succeeded in selling some by disposing of them for Mass intentions,—I say *some*, because the greater number still remain,—I am in constant dread lest the mice or some other misfortune destroy those remaining. On the other hand, so long as the works are in our possession, they will not easily find a market in Naples. Booksellers usually succeed in selling the works on hand, whereas the Brother whom I retain at Naples, not keeping a store, will hardly sell one in a century. I feel all this very keenly, for I look upon your interests as my own. It was for this reason that I charged the Brother to inquire diligently among the booksellers for some trustworthy person who would take the works on his own account.

I know that the person selected is well qualified; but he is poor, and, as I have mentioned above, I think the consideration he asks is rather large. I pray you let me know whether you will be satisfied for me to act with perfect freedom, and make from the sale of your books whatever I can. I shall try to get as much as possible for them. I await your reply. Be assured, however, that I have no particular interest in this man. All my interest is in your favor. Advise as you think best, and I shall follow your directions.

I have already given my new work on the *Passion* [1] to the press. Two other little works [2] will be joined to it, one of which, against the Deists, has cost me six months' labor. In the composition of this work I have consulted numerous

1 "Pious Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ."

2 "Reflections on the Truths of Divine Revelation against the Principal Objections of the Deists."

French and Italian authors, and I think it will prove very useful in these times. I have been thinking of printing it separately, as well as placing it in the work of which I speak.

The third little work [1] contains devout thoughts and maxims, and is somewhat similar to the chapters and reflections of Thomas à Kempis. The volume will be in *duodecimo;* but with the addition of these little works it will be more bulky than I anticipated. However, as soon as I have finished it, I shall send it to you, that you may publish it if you see fit. If you do not care about printing it, do not trouble yourself about my suggestion.

As is my wont, I shall have a few copies printed here so that, if it meets with public approbation, some one else may publish a new edition. If the people do not care for it, I shall not take the trouble of having it reprinted. It is sufficient for me that my intention in composing it is good, namely, for the glory of God.

I have said all this, because, some time ago, you were thinking of publishing a complete edition of my ascetical works, and you wrote me several letters on the subject. As you have not yet begun, I take it as a sign that you no longer entertain the idea; perhaps you do not consider it expedient. I resign myself in this matter entirely to the will of God, also to yours.

I perceive that you have not begun to print the three volumes of the *History of the Heresies*, nor do you even mention it. I thought the work would be published immediately; for it is the fruit of much labor and very useful to ecclesiastics and people of the world. Yet, I repeat, do in this matter what you think most favorable to your own interests. I shall not consider myself slighted should it not be given to the press.

I would, however, ask you, in case some gifted critic

[1] "Devout Reflections on Various Points of Spiritual Life."

has passed a severe censure on it, to inform me, and explain the defects he noticed; for I can prove that his censure is unjust. Satisfy my curiosity on this point, I beg of you. Here in Naples the work has passed [*per ignem et aquam*] through fire and water. It was examined most scrupulously by a very severe Rigorist. Pardon me the weariness I have caused you in writing thus at length, contrary to my custom.

I pray you to answer this letter, and particularly with regard to the plan of delivering to the person mentioned all your works on hand. If, however, you wish me to retain them, I shall do so.

With sentiments of profound respect,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 269.

To the Same.

He inquires concerning the receipt of the preceding letter, asks him to attend to a certain business matter, and informs him of the favorable reception of his works in Germany.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

ARIENZO, March 2, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: It must be more than a month and a half since I wrote you a very long letter, informing you that we had found a certain person ready to take all your books, but for a consideration. In the same letter, I spoke also of various other matters. I have, therefore, been anxiously awaiting a reply; but as yet none has come. Do me the favor of letting me know whether you received that

letter or not; for if you have not received it, I shall have to write to you again about those matters.

Allow me to recommend the following to your kindness. A religious residing at Trent has written in the most pressing haste to a certain person to learn whether a work he mentions has been prohibited by the Pope. The answer is enclosed in the accompanying letter. The person consulted, who knows well the friendly relations that exist between us, earnestly requests you to have this answer forwarded as quickly as possible to the religious to whom it is directed.

Again I beseech you to inform me immediately whether you have received my letter treating of your books.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] I have received a letter from some one, not a resident in the kingdom, saying that the Germans have received my *Moral Theology* very favorably, also my spiritual writings, several of which have been translated into their language. *Soli Deo honor et gloria!* [To God alone be the honor and glory!]

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 270.

To the Same.

The great affection of the saint for Remondini.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

ARIENZO, March 27, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: Only to-day was I thinking that, perhaps, some serious illness might be the cause of my not

receiving any letters from you, and particularly with regard to the sale of your books and the printing of the *History of the Heresies*. But this evening, I have received your most welcome letter, and learned from it, to my sorrow, of your long and severe illness. I am consoled, however, by the news that you are now perfectly restored.

In accordance with the commission given me in this letter, I shall see that negotiations for the sale of your books be resumed; and since you refer the whole matter to my good judgment, you may rest assured that I shall act as though the affair were my own, and endeavor to get as much out of the sale as I can. If I do not succeed in doing so immediately, I shall see that it is done, at least, by degrees. I am very sorry that the person who is taking the books is as poor as he is honest; for I must first listen to his plans and see what he wishes to do, before I can close the bargain. I shall do what lies in my power.

The printing of the little work on the *Passion* is not yet finished. I shall have the two other little works printed next. They are small, but they have cost me a great amount of labor. When the whole book is finished, I shall send it to you.

With regard to the *Sermons for Sundays*, it is indeed true that the booksellers here have printed it and exposed it for sale. Yet you should know that when Signor Paci, who usually does my printing, and Signor Terres, the bookseller, asked me for permission to publish it, I refused them point-blank. After this refusal they went to work secretly and printed it. What can I do? Patience! They have published it, however, without the additions contained in your edition.

I am pleased to learn from your letter that your delay in printing the *History of the Heresies* was not due to any evil report that reached you concerning it, but to your sickness, and to a new edition of St. Thomas that you had on

hand. I trust that, as soon as these works of St. Thomas are published, you will give me the consolation of knowing that the *History of the Heresies* is going to press.

Of the *Collection of Ascetical Writings* we shall speak later when God enlightens us on the subject. This very evening, I have ordered renewed prayers, as the persecution against you has not yet ceased, and I myself shall continue to pray for your intention.

With sentiments of profoundest respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 271.

To the Same.

He informs him of his own serious illness, now passed, and of what has been done in regard to the books.

Live Jesus and Mary!

ARIENZO, April 25, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: In the first place, I wish to give you an account of my health. During Easter week, I was very near passing to the other life. To a severe attack of catarrh of the chest, which of itself could have carried me off, was added a violent fever followed by a chill of three hours and a half. The physicians assured me that if the fever returned, it would prove fatal. I am now restored, however, and, thanks be to God, able to say Mass. I have recommenced my work on the *Passion* and the two other little treatises to be annexed to it. Should God spare my life, I am planning another work which will be very

useful, namely, the translation into the vernacular of those passages in the Psalms which are most difficult to understand; the easy passages everyone can make out.[1]

I learn from Naples that the Brother of our Congregation is arranging the affair of your books with the person who wished to take them. I earnestly pray that he may succeed, for the gentleman in question is not indeed very well off, but most conscientious. I am confident, therefore, that he will not cheat me.

In your last letter you held out the hope of sending the *History of the Heresies* to press. Let me know whether you have done so. In case you have begun the printing I would ask you, after the first and second volumes are finished, to withhold the publication of the third. I want to send you a slight correction which, although not absolutely necessary, will be very useful in removing an apparent ambiguity.

Let me be informed on all these points. With renewed sentiments of profound respect,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

1 This work was composed and published in 1774. It bore the title: "A Translation of the Psalms and Canticles of the Divine Office."

LETTER 272.

To the Same.

The same subject.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, May 8, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: I was pleased to learn from your letter of April 24 that the *History of the Heresies* is now in press. I wrote you, but my letter, I think, had hardly reached you when you sent off yours of the 24th. I requested you to withhold the publication of the third volume, as I had to send you a little addition which will aid in making a certain point clear. This addition I now send, that you may insert it in its proper place at once.

With regard to the affair of your books, I wrote in my last letter, asking what was to be done. Some days ago, I learned that they are taking an inventory of all the books on hand, preparatory to concluding the bargain.

I still continue to recommend to our good Lord yourself and all your interests both spiritual and temporal. With this assurance

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 273.

To the Same.

He speaks of the addition for the *History of the Heresies*, and asks for some copies of the *Moral*.—Various works upon which he is engaged.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, May 27, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: As I have twice written you about a certain small addition for the third volume of the *History of the Heresies*, and received no answer, I begin to fear that my letters have miscarried. I enclose this slip, therefore. It contains the addition alluded to, which I wish you to get before beginning to print the third volume. Insert it at the place designated.

I must inform you that all the copies of the large *Moral*, at Naples, have been sold. Be kind enough to send some more. It would be well if you could send them to some bookseller at Naples; for I should refer to him all who are asking for the work. Even now they are not few. In case you have no one to whom you can send them, forward them to me. I shall see that they are disposed of. Do not, however, send more than fifty; for, as I have already written you, I am no longer at Naples, and here I have not the same opportunity of selling them that the booksellers have. They keep public stores, and know how to dispose easily of the books on hand.

I have nothing else to send just now. The printing of my little work on the *Passion* and its two companions, is nearly finished. The manuscript is entirely completed. As soon as they come from the press, I shall send them to you.

I have already begun a new work, the translation into the vernacular of all the *Psalms of the Breviary*, with ex-

planatory notes on the most difficult passages. It will be a very useful and salable work, and is intended for priests and religious. If God spares my life to complete it, I trust it will be of great utility to all obliged to the Divine Office.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 274.

To the Same.

He asks for some copies of the *Moral Theology*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

[ARIENZO, June 1773.]

Most Illustrious Sir: I write once more to ask you, as I did in my last letter, to send me forty or fifty copies of the latest edition of my *Moral*. Many are calling for it. Not a single copy of this edition is to be had in Naples.

My new work [on the *Passion*] is not yet finished. As soon as it is, I shall send it to you.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 275.

To the Same.

Negotiations for the sale of the books.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, June 19, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: With pleasure I have received your letter of May 29, from which I learn of the arrival of the little addition to be inserted in the third volume of the *History of the Heresies*. I am glad that it reached you in time, for I feared it would not.

With regard to the sale of the books, I have had the Brother in charge of your works come here expressly to arrange with him their price. I have determined upon a moderate one; for if I placed it too high, purchasers might turn their backs upon me. Now I hope they will buy. After the bargain is made, it remains to be seen how and when they promise to pay me. Once they have taken possession of the books, I should not like to be obliged to bring them before the court for my money—a pretty law-suit it would be! I shall see how I may best consult your interests.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 276.

To the Same.

He asks the publisher to procure for him a certain work, and to insert or have inserted in the *Bullarium* of Benedict XIV. a Brief in favor of the Congregation.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, July 10, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have had diligent search made in Naples for a copy of Mgr. Fénelon's "History of Jansenism", which has been translated into Italian, and brought down, in notes, to the time of Benedict XIV. I am certain it was published at Venice. I beg you to make inquiries about it, and send it to me with the copies of the new *Moral*, which I am daily expecting. Let me know the price, and I shall transmit to you.

With sentiments of profound respect.—

I wish to ask another favor of you in behalf of our entire Congregation. Should you or any of the publishers at Venice be printing the *Bullarium* of Benedict XIV., I beg you to inform me of the fact without delay, as the Brief of Approbation of our Congregation is not contained in the present edition of that work. In case, therefore, a new edition were to be published, I should like to have this Brief inserted, and I am quite willing to defray all necessary expenses. As soon as I receive intimation, I shall send you a copy of the Brief attested by the Curia. Do not forget this matter, I pray you.

As ever,

Your very humble and devoted servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 277.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

He acknowledges the receipt of his letter, and speaks of the sale of the books.

[ARIENZO, beginning of August, 1773.]

Most Illustrious Sir: Your letter came to hand this very day. Immediately upon its receipt I wrote to Signor Oronzio Noe, to let me know whether the fifty copies of the *Moral* had come, or if not, to inform me as soon as they arrive.

I intend to give them to the booksellers to dispose of, as the number asking for it is not very great. The booksellers, however, will, I trust, have no difficulty in taking them, especially since the discount of forty per cent is all in their favor, and in Naples the work, though eagerly sought after, is not easily obtained. As soon as I receive the money for them, I shall send it to Signor Moschini.

I am very glad that you will soon send the *History of the Heresies*. But I beg you to intrust the copies to some bookseller at the capital; for as I have repeatedly written you, I have no means of disposing of your works, as my priests are not very fond of reading.

With regard to the works remaining on our hands at Naples, my agent informs me that he has spoken to a number of persons concerning the sale, but has made no bargain with anyone as yet. They all object to the price; but I do not intend to throw them away by selling them so cheap.

I am very sorry that things are in this state, as I wish to see your interests prosper; but I am a poor cripple and cannot go to Naples. If I were able to go, I should succeed better in this transaction. Still I shall do what lies in

my power. About the *Moral*, however, you need not be anxious: for, at Naples, this work is the one for which there is the greatest demand. For some time past, it could not be had.

I am sorry to learn of the illness of Signor Giambattista. I shall pray earnestly to our dear Lord to restore him to health. With sentiments of profound respect.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant.

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 278.

To the Same.

He apprises him of an error for which he suggests a remedy, and speaks again of the Brief to be inserted in the *Bullarium*.—His joy at the publication of the *History of the Heresies*, and the impossibility of selling the books.

ARIENZO, August 21, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have just received your letter of the 2d instant, also one from Signor Oronzio Noe, informing me that the package containing the fifty copies of the *Moral* has arrived. But in this connection, I must apprise you of a mistake on my part. I thought, as I wrote you, that not even a single copy of the preceding edition of my *Moral* was to be found in Naples. But having spoken to some of the leading booksellers about the sale of these fifty copies of the latest edition, which I was expecting from day to day, I learned that they have still some copies of the former on hand. They were, consequently, rather loath to undertake the sale of a new edition before disposing of the preceding one. I see, therefore, that, if I send for these

books to Manfredonia, they will probably remain upon my hands, as do the rest of your works, with regard to which, although we have made every effort, we have not yet succeeded in finding a person with whom we could make a bargain for them. Buyers want to have them for almost nothing; but I have neither the authorization nor the inclination to throw them away.

I fear that a similar fate may befall these fifty copies of the *Moral.* In my diocese, I think I shall hardly sell more than three or four. I would say, then, that if you deem it advisable to send for them to Manfredonia to be sold elsewhere, you may act as you think best. I shall write to Signor Noe, meanwhile, that I shall not require him to forward the package to me until I receive an answer from you. Should you wish me to send for it, I shall do so; but I have a well-grounded fear that the books will lie on my hands, if the booksellers do not take them. The transportation will, moreover, cost me about ten ducats.

I am much annoyed at this mistake, for I did not believe there was a single copy of the former edition in Naples. Let me know what you consider most advantageous to your interests, and I shall act accordingly.

When you succeed in your search of Mgr. Fénelon's "History of Jansenism", be so kind as to forward it to me immediately, indicating both the price and expenses.

With regard to the *Bullarium*, I shall see that a copy of the Brief in favor of our Congregation is made. There is no need of hurry, as it belongs only near the end of the fourth volume. It was expedited in 1749, during the eighth year of Benedict XIV.'s Pontificate. Inform me at once when you begin the edition of the *Bullarium*, that I may be reminded of having this copy made in case it should not have been already drawn up.

I am glad that the *History of the Heresies* is finished.

Once more, I remind you not to send me any copies for sale, as the priests of my diocese are not eager for such books; indeed, they have very little love for any reading whatsoever. Besides, I am a poor cripple, who am nearing my grave, and I do not know what I should do with these copies.

Rest assured, that I regard all your interests as though they were my own. If I could only visit Naples, I might be able to do something personally. But confined here in this poverty-stricken Arienzo, I write letters innumerable to people in Naples about the sale, but with very little result. I am much afflicted at this, but affliction seems to be all that I am to reap from these negotiations.

With sentiments of profound respect,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 279.

To the Same.

He sends him an authenticated copy of the Brief to be inserted in the *Bullarium* of Benedict XIV., indicating the place and manner of its insertion.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

ARIENZO, August 26, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have been reflecting upon what you told me in your last letter, namely, that you would probably publish an edition of the *Bullarium* of Benedict XIV. in a short time. I have also learned from the work itself that, according to the order of its issue, the Bull, or rather Brief in favor of our Congregation is not to be placed

in the fourth volume, but in the third, and what is more, at the very beginning of that volume. In order, therefore, not to have the misfortune of finding the third volume printed when I send the copy of the Brief, I have hastened, and at some expense, to have a copy, authentic as you will perceive, made from the archives of the Archiepiscopal Curia of Benevento. This copy I herewith enclose.

I have remarked that this Brief of Approbation of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer is to be inserted in the third volume of the *Bullarium*, immediately after the Bull whose title or summary is as follows: *On the care and neatness of the church: the arrangement of ministrations and ecclesiastical music; circular letter to the bishops of the States of the Church on the approach of the Jubilee year.* This Bull is dated February 19, 1749, and begins at page 9, vol. iii.

The Brief approving our Congregation has been copied from the original in the Chancery of the Curia. It is authenticated in due form and bears the signature and seal of the Vicar-General. You may, therefore, show it to the censors in Venice, that they may raise no obstacle to its publication. The title or summary of the Brief is as follows, and must be in Latin: *De approbatione et confirmatione Congregationis SS. Redemptoris sacerdotum, missionibus, præsertim ad rusticos in villis degentes, addictorum.*

Pardon the inconvenience I cause you. Doubtless, you have received my last letter, in which I spoke of the arrival of the package at Manfredonia. I shall not repeat here what has been already said, but shall await your reply. Renewing my assurances of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] You have ere this heard of the suppression of the Jesuits.[1] Let me know what your people say of the Jesuits residing at Venice.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 280.

To the same.

He speaks of the sale of the books, of his own latest works, and encloses a letter to be transmitted to a priest at Verona.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

ARIENZO, September 23, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: On receipt of your letter I wrote to Signor Oronzio Noe, of Manfredonia, to forward the fifty copies of the *Moral*, and the package containing the twenty-five copies of the *History of the Heresies* with which you so kindly presented me. I thank you most sincerely for your generosity.

With regard to the *Moral*, I shall be able to sell a few copies now, as some priests have asked me for them. The rest will, I am sure, be sold at Naples, but we must wait a little. The booksellers, who still have on hand some copies of the preceding edition, will not take this new one before they have disposed of the other. I shall do what I can, for I regard your interests as though they were my own.

Speaking of the other publications, I have received a letter from Naples saying that there is a person there who would like to undertake the sale. I shall inquire his terms. If I could get him to travel about the kingdom, I am sure that our profit would be twice as large as in Naples. But

[1] The Bull *Dominus ac Redemptor* suppressing the Society of Jesus, is dated July 21, 1773.

having no one whom I can trust in this matter, I fear to lose both capital and interest.

I have finished my book on the *Passion*, also the two additional works. I shall send them to you shortly, that you may do what you choose with them. I neither request nor demand their publication. The same holds good with regard to another work of which the greater part is printed; I mean the *Translation of the Psalms*, into Italian, a work they are anxiously waiting for at Naples.

I enclose a letter to his Excellency, Signor Don Mandricardo Malatesta, of Verona, in which I reply to some questions in theology proposed by him. He sent me his address written as I have it on this letter. I should like to know whether you are acquainted with him, and what kind of person he is. In his letter, he calls himself a priest and confessor. I think he must be a nobleman.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 281.

To the Same.

He thanks him for some favors, and informs him of the sending of the work on the *Passion*.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

ARIENZO, October 7, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: From your esteemed letter of the 20th of September I learn that you have received the copy of the Bull [or rather the Brief of Approbation] in favor of

our Congregation, to be inserted in the *Bullarium* of Benedict XIV., which you are going to print. I thank you very much for this favor, as it will afford me great consolation.

I have already sent for the fifty copies of the *Moral* forwarded to me *via* Manfredonia. They have not as yet arrived. To please you, I shall do what I can to dispose of them, as I am desirous of assisting you in every way. I must thank you especially for the twenty-five copies of the *History of the Heresies* with which you present me. I can assure you I shall accept them with indescribable satisfaction. I trust they will come with the copies of the *Moral* from Manfredonia. I shall inform you at once of their arrival.

I send you, as requested, the work on the *Passion* recently completed. Do with it as you please. I do not pretend that you should print all the works I send you.

At present I am engaged upon another work, *A Translation of the Psalms*, and a good part of the printing is done. Should you wish it, I shall forward it to you as soon as finished.

I have written to the Brother at Naples to send the book on the *Passion* and the two accompanying works to Signor Moschini, that he may forward them to you.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] For the last twenty days, I have not been able to say Mass on account of an abscess on my foot. I do not know when it will heal. Recommend me to Jesus Christ.

After an old copy.

LETTER 282.

To the Same.

He acknowledges the receipt of some books, and asks for an explanation with regard to the price.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, October 21, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have already received the fifty copies of the *Moral* and the twenty-five copies of the *History of the Heresies*, from Manfredonia. I have sent the greater part of the *Morals* to be bound, and shall attend to the sale when opportunity offers.

With regard to the price, I find upon a card enclosed in your letter that the fifty copies are marked at six hundred and sixty *lire*, or, deducting the discount, at four hundred and forty *lire*. Would you kindly inform me at once whether this is correct, that no mistake may be made?

Nothing further just now. With sentiments of sincere regard,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After an old copy.

LETTER 283.

To the Same.

After further inquiries regarding the price of the books sent, he speaks of the sale of the publisher's books.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, November 14, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your letter of the 30th of October, and in reply would inform you that the

packages containing fifty copies of the *Moral* and twenty-five copies of the *History of the Heresies*, respectively, have arrived from Manfredonia. For the latter, I again thank you most sincerely. I shall endeavor to dispose of the *Moral* as quickly as possible.

In my last letter I wrote to you about the price of the new *Moral;* for I lost the note that you sent me on the subject. As far as I can remember, I think six hundred and sixty *lire* was the cost of the fifty copies, and, with the discount deducted, the amount was reduced to four hundred and forty *lire*. Let me know if this is correct, otherwise a mistake may be made.

Brother Francesco writes to me from Naples that a number of the copies of the preceding edition have been sold. I do not cease urging him to procure the sale of the rest. These copies were not disposed of hitherto, because the booksellers who called for them would not pay promptly, and we were not sure of the money.

The book on the *Passion* has been printed at Naples. I ordered Brother Francesco to send a copy of it to Signor Moschini, that he might forward it to you. I think the Brother has done so; but I shall write to him once more on the subject.

The *Translation of the Psalms* is not yet finished. I shall send you a copy as soon as it is printed.

I am well again, and the abscess on my foot is completely healed. With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After an old copy.

LETTER 284.

To his Director, Father Don Andrea Villani. [1]

He explains the reasons that compel him to refute a new adversary, and takes this opportunity to explain and confirm his *Moral System*.

[ARIENZO, November 21, 1773.]

As your Reverence cannot come now, I shall expect you when you will have leisure. At present, I desire to know whether you still agree with those who think that if I were to reply to the Abbate Magli, the utter ruin of the Congregation would be the result. Good God! this misfortune did not befall us when I refuted Father Patuzzi, who was altogether a different sort of man from Magli, and is our total destruction to follow because I would refute this man, who, I understand, is regarded (what indeed he seems to be from his writing) as a fanatic?

Your Reverence knows full well that to establish my *System* with regard to the choice of opinions, and to avoid a Rigorism which might bring ruin upon souls, I have labored untiringly for twenty years.[2] I wrote a *Reply*

1 This letter is not entire, the first part, which does not treat of scientific matters, being given in vol. ii. p. 522 of the *General Correspondence*.

2 In the beginning the saint was a *Probabiliorist*, as were his early teachers. "During the course of my ecclesiastical studies," he writes in his "Apologetic Rejoinder" of the 16th of January, 1764, spoken of in a note on page 241, of the first volume of this *Special Correspondence*, "my masters from the very start were all teachers of the Rigorist School. The first book on Moral Theology they placed in my hands was Genetti, the Prince of *Probabiliorists*, and for a long time I was an active defender of my masters' teaching." But in 1741, that is fifteen years after his promotion to the priesthood, he had entirely abandoned this System, and was no longer a *Probabiliorist*. "On the 24th of October," thus we read in his journal, "Mgr. Falcoia [commanded me under obedience] to make use of the Probable Opinion as so many others do." From that

against Father Patuzzi, and my remarks were universally applauded by the learned; yet I used only the teaching of St. Thomas and the leading theologians of the Church.

Signor Magli has brought into the field a new system to oppose me, and he asserts that he who follows my *System* shows that he is a disciple of Hobbes, Spinoza, and Epicurus,—charges which not even Father Patuzzi has ever made against me. But as Magli raises new issues, many may be led into the error of thinking that I and my Congregation are teaching pernicious doctrine, unless I show clearly that what he maintains is so absurd as not to be tenable. As a bishop, therefore, and as Superior of the Congregation, I deem it absolutely necessary for my own honor, and for that of the Congregation, to undertake to defend myself, and prove that we are not as Magli says, either Manicheans or followers of Hobbes.

time he studied unremittingly for nearly twenty years, as he writes to Father Villani, before he composed his System. In 1762, he published his "Short Dissertation on the Moderate Use of the Probable Opinion", of which we have spoken in a note to the letter of December 27, 1762 (*Special Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 203). The attacks, accusations, in a word, the relentless war waged upon him, especially by Father Patuzzi, far from casting him down, only served as occasions to the saint, as far as the year 1773, and even later, to confirm and elucidate with greater clearness than ever his *Moral System* in a series of Apologies and Dissertations, and resulted in a complete triumph over all his adversaries. He is, therefore, perfectly correct in saying, as he does in this letter, that he had labored twenty years composing his System; and in the "Declaration of his System" against Magli, counting the years he had spent in defending that System, he could say at number 49: "During the course of thirty years, I have read innumerable authors, Rigorist and Laxist, upon this subject, and all this time I have besought God for light, to fix upon a system that I might follow without fear of error. At length, I have determined upon my System."

My reply, I imagine, will be short, hardly two folios. I shall not mention Magli by name, but say in general: *my opponents, my adversaries say so and so;* and I shall endeavor to speak as is my wont, without giving cause for offence or wounding the feelings of anyone. I shall employ only the teaching of St. Thomas and the best theologians.

I have sought counsel in this matter, and prudent persons have told me that I am bound to defend myself, at least as a bishop and Superior of the Congregation. The greatest caution they gave me was that I should not mention Magli by name; but it is sufficient for my purpose to say in general: *my opponents, my adversaries.* Enough of this for the present. I want you to write to me whether your apprehension for the safety of the Congregation has subsided, especially as I am going to make known to the world in this contemplated *Reply* that I do not follow the teaching of the Jesuits. On the contrary, I condemn it; and although I have used the text of Busenbaum in my *Moral,* it was rather for the sake of the method he follows, which is excellent, than for his doctrine, which is not so. Further, I shall make it evident to all that I maintain that the opinion in favor of the law must be followed when it is *more probable,* and that I denounce Probabilism entirely. What I say is simply this: When the opinion in favor of the law is certainly doubtful, the law does not oblige; for in that case, the doubt is promulgated, and not the law. And here I can quote innumerable passages from St. Thomas and a hundred theologians, that a law which is not promulgated, has no binding force. This little work will, I think, vindicate my honor and that of the Congregation, as it will show that we are not Probabilists, nay, that we utterly reject and condemn their System.

More I cannot say on account of my head. Let me

have an answer, I pray you, as soon as possible.[1] I bless your Reverence and the rest.

BROTHER ALFONSO MARIA.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 285.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

He acknowledges the receipt of a letter, and speaks of matters mentioned in a preceding one.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, December 2, 1773.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your esteemed letter with the advice regarding the *Moral*, and I thank you for the same. Rest assured that in what pertains to your books I am more interested than if this were altogether my own affair.

I am now engaged upon the *Translation of the Psalms*. It is costing me so much trouble that it will extinguish in me the desire ever to publish anything again.

The work on the *Passion* was sent [to Signor Moschini] long before I wrote my last letter to the Brother directing him to forward it. I trust you have received it by this time.

[1] The reply of Father Villani was favorable, and the saint accordingly published this work under the title: "Declaration of the Author's System of the Regulation of Moral Actions, containing his Replies to Objections recently raised.—1774."

Recommend me to Jesus Christ, as I do this kindness to you. With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After an old copy.

LETTER 286.

To the Same.

He speaks of his health, which has been much impaired by application to the work which he now asks him to print. —The sale of the publisher's books.

Live Jesus, Joseph, and Mary!

ARIENZO, May 22, 1774.

Most Illustrious Sir: Of late I have suffered much from ill-health, particularly from my head. The physicians tried bleeding, cauterizing, and other remedies for my relief. At present, I am quite well again, and, as I have not written to you for a long time, I shall do so now.

My head trouble was due in great measure to the work: *Translation of the Psalms*, which, thanks be to God, is now finished and will appear in a few days. This work has cost me incredible labor. I should like to know whether you desire me to forward it to you when it is published. If so, I shall send it by the usual route, namely, through Signor Moschini. I merely mention this, for I do not wish to give you further annoyance about the publication of my books, with which I have been plaguing you for so many years.

With regard to the copies of the *Moral*, I have disposed of some of them here at the best price I could, in order to reimburse myself for the expense of transportation, which I paid, and for the alms I distributed in your name. I have thus succeeded in recovering the greater part of this amount.

You have probably learned the misfortune that has befallen me in losing our good Brother Francesco.[1] He used to transact all my business at Naples. His death was sudden, consequently everything is in confusion. I have stationed another Brother[2] there now, and have ordered him to bestir himself about the sale of your works. He wrote me that he had spoken to one of the booksellers. I shall direct him to endeavor to close the bargain immediately.

I am sorry that I am confined in this poor corner of my diocese, a perfect cripple. The deceased Brother could sell some of your books at times, but the present incumbent knows very little about such matters. Still I shall continue to do what lies in my power. It is too bad that you have in Naples no reliable correspondent who is a bookseller; for booksellers, when so inclined, easily find means to dispose of their works. See wherein I may be of service to you and let me know what you desire, as I am ready to assist you.

Let me know about your health, and whether anything

[1] Brother Francesco Tartaglione died on the 21st of March, 1774. The saint was apprised of the fact in a supernatural manner. See Letter 766, *General Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 18, note 3.

[2] Brother Michele Ilardo.

is to be done. I shall not neglect to do for you whatever I can.

With this assurance I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 287.

To the Sovereign Pontiff, Clement XIV.

He dedicates to His Holiness the *Translation of the Psalms.*

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

Most Holy Father: As I have composed the present work in these last years of my life—for I am already very feeble and expect death from day to day, and as its subject-matter is the Psalms of David, the recitation of which, next to the administration of the sacraments and the preaching of the word of God, forms the holiest occupation of those dedicated to the service of God, who thereby perform on earth the office that the angels fulfil in heaven, namely, the chanting of the divine praises, there is none, I think, to whom I could dedicate it with greater propriety than to Your Holiness, the Head of the Church, and the Vice-Gerent of Jesus Christ on earth. It it not my intention here to enumerate the high encomiums Your Holiness for many reasons deserves. Rather than offend your humility, I shall omit praising the numerous examples of shining virtues that you present to the eyes of the world:

your mortified life, your detachment from relatives, your freedom from all human respect. But there is one thing that I cannot pass over in silence, and that is, the consummate prudence displayed by Your Holiness in the wise measures adopted to secure the quieting of those dissensions which caused so much anxiety to all who have the interests of the Church at heart.

Your Holiness will, I trust, be pleased with my work which may be of some utility to those who recite the Divine Office, many of whom understand little Latin, little of the meaning of the words and still less that of the Psalms, which are for the most part so difficult to understand that even the learned can scarcely interpret them. Many, it is true, have endeavored to explain them, but their labors have not been so generally useful as might be desired, either because they wrote in Latin, or in a style too lofty and elevated. To remedy this evil I have tried as well as I could, to make the sense of the Psalms intelligible, so that all might understand what they are saying, and in consequence, recite the Divine Office with greater attention.

This work I place at the feet of Your Holiness to correct, if correction be necessary, and to bless it, if you think it will be useful to the faithful. Humbly prostrate before your throne, I implore your most holy blessing.

Of Your Holiness,

The most humble, devoted, and
obedient servant and son,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the page printed at the beginning of the work.

LETTER 288.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

He thanks him for his solicitude about his health, and also for the publication of the work on the *Passion*, promising to send the *Translation of the Psalms*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, June 30, 1774.

Most Illustrious Sir: I acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and thank you for your solicitude about my health. At present, I am quite well, but the feebleness of old age announces the approach of death.

The *Translation of the Psalms* has not yet come from the press. As soon as it is finished, I shall send it to you. I thank you most particularly for having published the work on the *Passion*. I am pleased that the edition has been so carefully made.

I have again written to the Brother at Naples to make an inventory of all your books without delay. As soon as I receive the list, I shall transmit it to you.

I am very glad that you have determined to write to some bookseller in Naples with regard to facilitating the sale of the books. Here I am, quite feeble and decrepid, waiting at the gate of eternity, and I should be sorry to leave them unsold. True, my Fathers would give you an account of them, but with the sale they would not succeed much better than myself.

Recommend me to God, as I do the same for you. With sentiments of profound respect,

I am, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 289.

To the Same.

Satisfied with the arrangement for the sale of the books, he informs the publisher of the measures taken to transport them, and refuses any return for his services.

ARIENZO, August 3, 1774.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your most welcome letter. I rejoice exceedingly that you have taken steps for the sale of your books, as I am rather advanced in years, and suffering from continual palpitation, which has increased of late, and threatens me with death from day to day, as my physician has assured me.

Brother Michele has already informed me of the receipt of your letter directing him to send the books to Signor Moschini. I shall write to the Brother and tell him faithfully to execute this command at once, that not a single book may be lost in forwarding. I shall tell him to send also the copies of the large *Moral*, fifteen of which I have retained to reimburse myself for the expense of bringing these copies from Manfredonia, and for the alms which I distributed according to your directions.

The royal permission for the publication of my *Translation of the Psalms* has not yet been granted. As soon as I receive it, I shall forward it to you through Signor Moschini.

No more at present concerning these matters. I await your orders, as you cannot question my willingness to serve you in every possible way.

Do not think, I beseech you, of making any present to the Brother [Michele], especially since he has done very little for you. All the work was done by Brother Francesco, whom, as you know, God has taken to himself. Besides, in attending to your affairs, these Brothers have been serving me, for it was I that charged them to care diligently for the sale and the preservation of your books. Do not, then, think of making any presents; for our Brothers, being bound by the vow of poverty in the same manner as the Fathers, cannot receive presents or have a private purse. Everything is incorporated into the Community, and, therefore, it is useless to think of making this present.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 290.

To the Same.

He sends the *Translation of the Psalms*, and asks the price of a certain work.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, September 28, 1774.

Most Illustrious Sir: I am sending you the *Translation of the Psalms*, a work which has cost me several years of labor, and very nearly brought on the loss of my mind, so fatiguing was the perusal of the numerous commentators,

who have given different interpretations. I send it to you, as I know you are anxious to have it.

I am waiting for the sixth volume of the "Lives of the Philosophers" by Father Celestino, the Abbot of San Fedele, if I mistake not. This volume is the last, and I am waiting to get it before paying for the entire work, five volumes of which I have already received. I inquired for it at your agent's in Naples, who belongs to the firm of Signori, and he told me that the volume had not yet been published. I do not know what to do. My death is drawing nigh, and I should not like to meet it with the scruple of leaving the five volumes unpaid for. Tell me what to do.

I again ask you to relieve my mind by telling me whether you have received your books from Signor Moschini, to whom I forwarded all we had on hand.

I conclude tendering you my most sincere regards, and placing myself at your service in whatever I may be of use to you. I say this, because now, at my advanced age of seventy-nine years, every letter I write seems to me as if it were to be the last.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] I have sent the book on the *Psalms* to Signor Moschini to be forwarded to you.

After an old copy.

LETTER 291.

To the Same.

He thanks him for a present, and speaks of a new work that he has already begun.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, November 3, 1774.

Most Illustrious Sir: In reply to your letter of the 22d of October, I thank you most heartily for the present you make me of the five volumes of the "Lives of the Philosophers". Should the sixth volume ever be published by any house, I beg you to procure it for me, that my set may not remain incomplete.

I again ask you to see whether you can procure for me, as I wrote you long since, Mgr. Fénelon's work against Jansenius,[1] and let me know the price. I have not been able to find it in Naples.

I trust that, by this time, my work, *A Translation of the Psalms*, has been published. It is read with much pleasure here.

In order not to be idle during the few moments of life that still remain, I have begun to compose a small devotional work, entitled: *The Victories of the Martyrs*, in which I shall collect the Acts of their martyrdom from the most celebrated authors. Three folios of this work are already printed. When finished, I shall have the honor to send it to you.

1 "History of Jansenism."

I am at your service in whatever I may be of use to you. With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 292.

To Signor Saverio Mattei.

He thanks him for his letter, and praises his work on the Psalms.[1]

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, November 20, 1774.

Most Illustrious Sir: I am highly gratified at the receipt of your most esteemed letter. In composing my little book

[1] Signor Mattei had published a translation of the entire Psalter, in six volumes. The original of his letter to the saint is preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome, and is as follows:

"Right Reverend and Most Illustrious Sir: I thank you in a most particular manner for the honorable mention you so frequently make of my work in your 'Translation of the Psalms' recently published for the use of your clergy. As I have completed my sacred labors in that direction in the publication of the last volume of my work, and am unable longer to continue in that path on account of my many forensic occupations, I am truly consoled to see others gloriously engaging in work for the general welfare. For myself, I am persuaded that God does not require more of me. If he did, he would have directed my affairs differently. At present, I feel that I should be wanting in my duty were I to neglect the affairs of my family, for the sake of following up an inclination, pious though it be.

Your Lordship's labors will be blessed by God, because they are directed toward the instruction of the ignorant, who frequently ask for bread and find no one to break it to them [*petunt panem, et non*

upon the Psalms, I had your work principally before me. It is a work for the learned and the unlearned, attractive as well as instructive; mine, on the contrary, is for the unlearned, instructive, but with little of attractiveness about it. All the learned men of Italy, and I may say of all Europe, have applauded your work; but mine will, perhaps, please only one or other devout person.

I follow your successes at the bar with great attention. But oh, how ardently would I not have wished that you might continue to employ in the service of the Church the talent and learning that God has bestowed on you! Still in your present calling, also, you can do much for our holy religion; for nowadays everyone talks theology and Holy Scripture, and one hears the most extravagant opinions expressed.

I will not annoy you further, but with sentiments of profound respect subscribe myself . . .

[*The signature of the saint is wanting.*]

After the edition of Mattei's "Christian Apology", published at Naples in 1788.

est qui frangat]. Above all I am glad that you have faithfully adhered to the literal sense, which is the true one, and that you have added those moral and spiritual reflections which inseparably accompany that sense, without giving heed to so many subtle questions, and frequently false speculations, of which the simplicity of the word of God, more penetrating than a two-edged sword [*penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti*], stands nowise in need.

My purpose was to instruct, but much more to attract the people, and I have succeeded. I had the happiness of rendering the most dissipated attentive to the recitation of the Psalms accompanied by music, and of making them lose all taste for profane poetry and profane music. Praise be to God from whom every good thing comes, and to whom I beg your Lordship to recommend me in your prayers.

Humbly asking your paternal blessing, I have the honor to be

Your Lordship's most humble and devoted servant,

NAPLES, November 15, 1774. SAVERIO MATTEI.

LETTER 293.

To Signor Onofrio Paci, Printer at Naples.

He begs him to suspend the printing of his works, and gives his reasons for this measure. He also recommends the correction of some folios already printed.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

[ARIENZO, December, 1774.]

I beg you to suspend the printing of my works for the present; for (I tell you this in all confidence) our Congregation is in great danger of utter ruin, thanks to the numerous unjust accusations made by *our friends*. Suspend the printing, therefore, of the work on *The Martyrs* and the smaller work, for a while; as just now we are looking for someone who will loan us money to defray the expenses which we must necessarily incur. I trust this hindrance will soon be removed, and then you may resume the printing of both works.

If you have already set up the next folio of *The Martyrs*, send it to me. I send you herewith the other folio corrected. My reason for wanting to have this work reprinted was that it might be free from the innumerable errors that appeared in Migliaccio's edition; but from the proofs you send me, I perceive that it contains far more. What sort of compositor is he who makes so many mistakes even from printed copy!

Your servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 294.

To Signor Giambattista Remondini.

He informs him of the success of the *Translation of the Psalms*, and speaking of the *Victories of the Martyrs*, he mentions a very useful compendium that is to be placed at the end.—His affection for the publisher.

ARIENZO, January 5, 1775.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your esteemed letter, and am glad that you have already received the book on the *Psalms*, and began to print it. It has been highly spoken of at Naples. Even the celebrated Don [Saverio] Mattei, who has composed a large work of six volumes on the Psalms in verse, has, of his own accord, written me a letter praising my book.

I am waiting for the sixth volume of the "Lives of the Philosophers", as also to learn the price of the complete work, a subject which has kept me in torment now for many years. I cannot bear the thought of this unpaid debt. It appears to me that I shall never rid myself of it.

I thank you for your diligent search for the work of Mgr. Fénelon. As it cannot be had, I must have patience. Should it accidentally come to light, inform me of the fact.

I am engaged upon the work of *The Martyrs*, which will comprise two small volumes. I hope that it will meet with general approbation, for I have collected the most interesting Acts of the martyrs that I could find in the numerous books which I had sent me for that purpose. At the end there will be a compendium of a celebrated French work on the holy Mass, which will prove very acceptable.[1]

The French author is, indeed, a learned man, but he hides himself behind so many words and matters almost

[1] "The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, with a Short Explanation of the Prayers of the Mass."

unintelligible, that it is tedious to read him, whereas what I have to say is made as clear as possible. I trust I shall succeed in finishing this compendium. I say *I trust*, for sickness is attacking me every day. God's will be done!

In life and in death, I shall entertain the most sincere affection for you and your whole family, and I shall ever pray to God to make you prosperous and happy as I desire.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata.

[*P. S.*] I understand that the copies of the *Moral Theology* and *Homo Apostolicus* are at Naples at Signor Moschini's, and that he manages to sell some of them occasionally. If they were the works of Rosseau or Voltaire, how soon they would be sold! May God help us!

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 295.

To the Same.

He thanks him for a favor, and promises to send the *Victories of the Martyrs*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, February 9, 1775.

Most Illustrious Sir: I am in receipt of your letter, from which I learn that you desire to have a copy of my work, *The Victories of the Martyrs*, revised and corrected, as soon as it is published. You also tell me that you will present me with the sixth volume of the "Lives of the Philosophers", a favor for which I thank you sincerely.

With regard to the work on *The Martyrs*, I was just

going to tell you that I am bringing it to completion. As soon as it is finished, you may be sure I shall not let it appear in public until I have informed you of the fact by sending you a copy, as you desire.

I have the several books of manuscripts of this work finished; but to reprint it with the accuracy I require, will take some time, especially in my present age and condition. I am now seventy-nine years old and continually subject to violent attacks of sickness, principally palpitation of the heart, which hourly threaten me with death. I am able to do little or nothing, and it seems that every moment will be my last.

Recommending myself, therefore, to your prayers, I remain with the most profound respect,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 296.

To the Same.

He speaks of the *Victories of the Martyrs*, and another work, and asks for information concerning the publication of Father Patuzzi's *Moral Theology*.

NOCERA, September 8, 1775.

I have finished the *Victories of the Martyrs*. In the first volume, I have spoken of the martyrs of different countries; in the second, of the Japanese Martyrs. This volume also contains various other little works which will prove useful to persons of every condition of life.[1] Next

[1] Besides the treatise on the "Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, etc.", this volume contained the following: "Exhortations to Religious to make Progress in the Perfection of their State"; "Advice to a Young

week, I shall send this work to Signor Moschini to be forwarded to you. I trust you will be pleased with my promptness.

After the resignation of my episcopal charge, I retired to one of the houses of our Congregation, namely, to Nocera; but should you wish to write to me, you may continue to direct your letters to the post-office at Naples.

Some time ago, I began another work. It will require a good deal of labor, and will prove very useful. I am going to call it the *Conduct of Divine Providence in Saving Mankind through Jesus Christ.* In the first part, which is already printed, it treats of all the prophecies, figures, types, and sacrifices that announced the coming of Jesus Christ. The second part will dwell particularly upon Jesus Christ, the conversion of the Gentiles, the destruction of Judea and the dispersion of the Jews, the spread of the faith, the overthrow of heresy, and, finally, the miserable death of the persecutors of the Church. It will also contain a little work of devotion. This new work will not be very large, only two small volumes; but it contains much matter, and will, I trust, be favorably received by the public.

Let me know whether you have completed the printing of Father Patuzzi's *Moral Theology* at your establishment; for I should like to have an entire copy of it. Let me

Student preparing for the Ecclesiastical State"; "Letter to a Young Man seeking Advice with Regard to the Choice of a State of Life"; "Exhortations to a Nun to advance in the Love of her Divine Spouse, Jesus Christ"; "Considerations for a Young Girl in Doubt as to the Choice of a State of Life"; "Exhortation to Religious Communities to practise Prayer before the Most Blessed Sacrament"; "Advice to All who would Secure their Eternal Salvation"; "Suggestions for Priests called upon to assist Condemned Criminals"; and "Novena for the Souls in Purgatory".

know, also, the price, that I may send it to you without delay.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 297.

To the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VI.

He dedicates to him the work mentioned in the preceding.

Most Holy Father: I have thought it only proper to dedicate to Your Holiness the work that I have published under the title: *The Admirable Conduct of Divine Providence in Saving Mankind through Jesus Christ;* for you are, at present, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and the Head of the Church Militant, whose mission it is to lead all men to their true home of bliss.

The glorious reign of Your Holiness, inaugurated with so much wisdom, prudence, and zeal, marked by so complete a detachment from relatives, and by the splendor of so many brilliant virtues, the selection of able ministers, and the appointment of so many worthy prelates, makes us confidently hope for the assured tranquillity of the universal Church.

I submit to Your Holiness this work of the last years of my life. In all probability it will be the last I shall publish, since for the past four or five months I find that my head is deserting me. I submit it to Your Holiness to correct in it whatever does not please you, and to bless whatever you

find in it useful to the children of the Church. Bless, also, the author whose life henceforward will be one continued remembrance of the numerous favors accorded him by Your Holiness, and especially (not to speak of others which your kindness bestowed) that of relieving him of the burden of the episcopate, a burden to which he had become unequal, as well an account of advanced age as of the many infirmities that constantly remind him of the approach of death. In return, he promises to be mindful of Your Holiness in his poor prayers all the days of his life, to the end that Your Holiness may be spared for many years.

Meanwhile, Most Holy Father, be pleased to impart to me and my companions the Apostolic Benediction, which, prostrate at your feet, I most humbly implore.[1]

Your most humble, devoted, and
obedient servant and son,
ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the folio printed at the beginning of the work, published at Naples by the Paci Brothers in 1775.

[1] In sending to the Sovereign Pontiff the work here dedicated to him, the saint submitted, also, another volume containing various writings. As a token of his extreme pleasure, His Holiness sent him the following letter:

"With very great pleasure have We received the two works with which you have presented Us, and in which your remarkable spirit of piety and admirable learning are alike conspicuous. These works greatly increase the paternal affection which We have for you, which, though it springs from Our high esteem of your merits and virtue, thereby received further confirmation. You may be convinced that whatever We have hitherto done in your favor, was but a pledge of Our particular regard for you, a regard which We are prepared to testify in a still higher degree, should opportunity offer. As a proof of this, Our paternal affection, We most lovingly impart to you and your Congregation the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at S. Maria Maggiore, under the Seal of the Fisherman, November 19, 1775."

LETTER 298.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

He sends the work, *The Conduct of Divine Providence*, informs him of a much larger work which he has begun, and speaks of a *Manifesto* he has published for the purpose of explaining his System, and defending it against the attacks of his adversaries.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, February 12, 1776.

Most Illustrious Sir: I send you by courier my new book, *The Conduct of Divine Providence*. It is not very large; but it cost me, if I mistake not, about three years of fatiguing labor, and, in my opinion, there is extant no work which so clearly vindicates the truth of the faith. At the end, there are three very useful little treatises.[1]

I would request that the text of this work be printed in pica and the headings in long primer, or, at least, in bourgeois; at present, these headings are printed in brevier, which is too small. You are at liberty, however, to print it or not, and in whatever type you please. Everything is very succinctly abbreviated; but there is not a passage that has not cost me much trouble to compose. Have it read by some learned man, for it is not a work to be judged by women. Be so kind as to tell me who have read it, or rather, I should like to know what they say about it.

I am now retired and at leisure, but I cannot remain idle. I have, accordingly, commenced a very extensive work which will treat of the particular and general judgments, purgatory, Antichrist, the resurrection, the signs of

1 These were: "A Short Treatise on the Love of God"; "Motives of Consolation and Confidence for a Soul in Desolation"; and "A Short Reply to the Extravagant Reform attempted by Abbate Rolli against the Devotion shown to the Mother of God".

the end of the world; the coming of Jesus Christ as Judge: the future state of the damned and of the blessed, and the state of the world after the Last Judgment.[1]

This is a gigantic task. I am a cripple confined to my invalid-chair, and yet I have to read an immense number of books, for the work is to be compiled entirely from theology and Holy Scripture. With the exception of texts of Holy Scripture and passages from the Fathers, the work will be entirely in the vernacular. I have some excellent books to consult; but it will require both time and health, and I am expecting death from day to day.

I have begun this work, and have already finished six treatises, as the work is to be divided into treatises; but I do not know whether I shall live to complete it. I have also begun to print what I have composed, and now two parts are completed. Some imagine that it will take ten or twelve volumes, but I think there will be only two or three in *duodecimo*. As I am an enemy to lengthy and verbose passages, which only tire one and are never read, I have condensed matters throughout. Nowadays, people want compendious works of reliable character. I trust that such will be mine, if I may judge from the treatises already printed, in which much is clearly stated, though briefly. I am aware that my works are highly praised for their clearness.

My only ambition, however, is, that all praise be given to God. I undertook this work for the welfare of souls. It contains everything that will make us keep constantly in view the end of our being, eternal joy or eternal misery.

In my Moral works, I have been criticised as a Probabilist and a follower of the Jesuits. To refute the charge, I have composed the present short *Manifesto*, which I enclose. What is said in this *Explanation* is developed at length in the *Monitum* inserted in the last edition of the

[1] This work is entitled: "Theologico-moral Treatises on the Last Things."

Moral Theology. This *Monitum*, I perceive, you have placed at the end of the second volume, where very few will notice it. It should have been put after the additions at the end of the third volume. It would be more conspicuous there. I send you two copies of the *Manifesto*. I should like you to forward one to Portugal where my *Moral* and *Homo Apostolicus* have been forbidden; for in the *Manifesto* I undeniably prove that I am neither a Probabilist of the old school, nor a too lax Jesuit. I am not a Rigorist, nor am I a Probabilist; my path lies between these extremes. Even Pope Benedict XIV. called me a fair author, and again a *prudens auctor*. Portugal, therefore, did wrong in forbidding my book.—But an end to this wearisome tale.

With sentiments of profound respect, I subscribe myself, Illustrious Sir,

Your very devoted and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop*.

[*Postscript of Brother Michele.*] Most Illustrious Sir: I have received from Monsignor, our Father, an order directing me to forward to you by the courier a work which he has recently published; but when I made inquiries as to the manner of sending it, my informant told me that the courier stops in Rome. I have, therefore, concluded to send it to Signor Moschini, as he told me he would have an opportunity of forwarding it this week. You will, then, receive it through him. In a few days, I shall make the final payment for the rest of the books in my charge. One hundred copies of the *Instruction* are still on hand, but they are selling gradually.

Should you have occasion to write to me, direct your letters, *Naples*. Those for Monsignor should be directed, *Nocera de' Pagani, via Naples*, as he receives all his letters from the post-office here.

Do not forget about the book that I ordered from you lately. When you send it, direct it to Signor Moschini.

I received this letter open, so as to be able to insert the number of the courier to whom the book was confided; but I have already told you how the matter has been arranged.

Your very humble servant,

BROTHER MICHELE ILARDO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

NAPLES, February 19, 1776.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 299.

To the Same.

He sends him a letter to be forwarded to its destination.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, March 7, 1776.

Most Illustrious Sir: A little over two weeks ago, I sent you, through Signor Moschini, a copy of one of my works recently published, *The Admirable Conduct of Divine Providence, etc.* I trust you have received it.

The enclosed letter is for M. Egidius de Hubens, at Liege. Be so kind as to see that it is forwarded by the first safe opportunity.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very devoted and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 300.

To Canon Giuseppe Simioli, Professor in the University at Naples.

The high regard of the holy Doctor for the teaching of St. Thomas, and his profound submission to the constituted ecclesiastical authorities.

[NOCERA], July 15, 1776.

Three times I have written to you concerning the point in St. Thomas which the censor [1] has objected to in my work, and which, he says, cannot be allowed to pass.

I repeat again that I will not adapt myself to his whims or be dependent on him. I shall depend on the archbishop, and do what he directs.

I know for certain that this doctrine of St. Thomas is publicly taught in the College of St. Thomas at Naples; and yet my censor says it cannot be permitted to pass. I shall say no more, but do what his Grace commands me. Had I foreseen this trouble, I should have preferred not to publish the work rather than give it to this censor to examine, or I should say, to attack St. Thomas,—a thing that has astounded the Dominicans. Indeed, *the teaching of St. Thomas cannot be permitted to pass!* Who says so? Holy Church? Not she, for Holy Church venerates the teaching of St. Thomas.

I beseech you, Illustrious Sir, to excuse me from making the correction demanded by the censor, for I will depend on the archbishop alone. I am very sorry that so much time has been lost. The *memorial* has already been issued at the palace, and now I am waiting to see what the archbishop will do, whether he will appoint another censor,

1 The ecclesiastical censor of the "Theologico-moral Treatises", Don Salvatore Ruggieri. What the point in question was, appears in the next letter.

or whether he will allow the teaching of St. Thomas to pass or not. I shall do whatever he commands. Patience!

With profound respect, I remain, etc.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 301.

To Canon Don Salvatore Ruggieri, Ecclesiastical Censor.

He defends the passages criticised, proving his great love of truth and most scrupulous exactness in his opinions.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, July 22, 1776.

Most Illustrious Sir: You have taken exception to a passage in number 24, page 215.[1] When a proposition of an author can be interpreted in a good sense, why should it be rejected? You say that the love of the soul in this life is not the same as that of the soul in bliss. I have found no one who treats this point with greater clearness than Suarez in his posthumous work *De Virtutibus theologicis, disp. 3, de carit., sect. 3.* He asserts that it is the common opinion of theologians with the Master of the Sentences (*in 3, dist. 3*) and St. Thomas (*1. 2., quæst. 67, art. 6*), that the love is the same *in via* as it is *in patria*, because its formal object, which is the divine Goodness known in a supernatural manner, is the same for a soul in this life as for those in Paradise.

To this it is objected that charity or love is perfected in heaven. The answer to this is, the accidental perfection of charity is made perfect in heaven; but the substantial per-

[1] This passage is as follows: "According, then, to the degree with which a soul loves God on earth, it will love him in heaven; but with a twofold difference: here below that love is free, there it is necessary; and, secondly, in heaven the love will be much more intense and perfect, for it will be purified from all defects, the degree, however, will be exactly the same."

fection remains the same, for the formal object, which is God, is the same.

St. Thomas explains this at length in the place quoted above. In the body of the article he concludes thus: "*Charity is not destroyed by the perfection of glory, but* (please note) *remains identically the same.*"[1] Replying to the first objection, he says even more clearly: "*When what is accidental is removed, the substance of a thing still remains.*"[2] And in the answer to the second objection, he explains with the greatest clearness that the love of the soul in this life is the same as in bliss. "*The object of charity*", he says, "*is not the cognition itself; if it were, charity would not be the same here as in bliss: but the object is the thing known, which is the same in both cases, namely God.*"[3] The Angelic Doctor, then, distinguishes our cognition of God from the object known, namely God, who is the same for one and for the other.

The substantial perfection of charity consists in the adhesion of the soul to God, whereas the accidental perfection consists in the intensity of that adhesion and its freedom from all defects.

In order to remove all ambiguity, however, I thought it well to arrange this passage as follows: "We should bear in mind that the love or charity of the soul in this life is substantially the same as that which it will possess in heaven. But two differences must be noted: the first, that during this life this love is free; in heaven it is necessary; the second, that, though this love is substantially the same, it will be more perfect and more intense, inasmuch

1 "Charitas non evacuatur per gloriæ perfectionem, sed eadem numero manet."—1, 2, qu. 67, art. 6, *in corp.*

2 "Remoto autem eo quod est per accidens, nihilominus remanet substantia rei."—*Ibid.* ad 1.

3 "Charitas non habet pro objecto ipsam cognitionem; sic enim non esset eadem in via et in patria: sed habet pro objecto ipsam rem cognitam, quæ est eadem, scilicet ipsum Deum."—*Ibid.* ad 2.

as it will be free from all defects. Substantially, however, it will be the same that it was on earth." Placing the matter in this light, I think, there is no ambiguity. Indeed, if we wished to investigate all the expressions that may be interpreted in a bad sense even in the most careful writers, we should find thousands of them that could not be permitted to remain.

Now to the question of infants.[1] I had written: *St. Augustine strongly holds to the contrary opinion;* this you have changed into *proves it by solid arguments.* It was not my intention to defend the opinion of St. Thomas. I simply quoted it, therefore, without giving his reasons and without mentioning the innumerable passages of the Fathers who defend this opinion. The authorities that I did quote, were all in favor of St. Augustine. But to wish to make me say that St. Augustine *proves* the contrary, is to wish to make me impugn St. Thomas, and say that the opinion of the Angelic Doctor is evidently false; in other words, to make me tell a downright lie by saying what I do not believe to be true. I would rather lose my life than tell a lie. I have, therefore, requested Benedetto Cervone [2] to obtain a modification of this proposition: *proves it by solid arguments.* It may be amended thus: *St. Augustine holds for certain*, or *maintains as irrefutable*, etc. Do not, I pray you, make me state what is false. How can I say

[1] That is, of infants who die without baptism. In the *Sixth Proposition* the saint proposes the question: Whether these infants, besides being excluded from heaven on account of original sin, suffer also the pain of sense and the pain of loss, and he answers by simply quoting the opinion of St. Thomas. That they will suffer neither the pain of sense nor the pain of seeing themselves deprived of the beatific vision. He then adds that St. Augustine *strongly holds to the contrary opinion.* The censor changed *strongly holds*, etc., into *proves the contrary by solid arguments.* It is of this that the saint here complains.

[2] The royal censor of the same work.

St. Augustine proves the contrary when I cannot satisfy myself that St. Thomas says anything false? I beg you not to constrain me thus any longer. Two months have passed in this state of anxiety. I implore you to do me the kindness of bringing this matter to an end.

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original in the possession of Signor Giancarlo Rossi at Rome.

LETTER 302.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

He announces the *Theological Treatises*, and speaks of other works already sent him, which he recommends him to publish.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, August 28, 1776.

Most Illustrious Sir: For some time past I have not written to you, as I had no occasion to do so. At present I write to inform you that I have finished the *Theological Treatises*, a work which I expected would be pretty large, but which, in reality, contains only thirteen or fourteen folios.

I shall have it sent to Signor Moschini this week, that he may forward it to you. But I do not know whether he will think of sending it, for he showed himself somewhat annoyed at the other works that I transmitted to him. You may write to him to forward this new work of mine, which will be the last I shall give to the press, as I have now reached my eightieth year. I am confined to my invalid-chair, and my head has forsaken me.

I do not know whether Signor Moschini sent you my other work, entitled: *The Conduct of Divine Providence*, a small book, also, and like the present one, containing about

fourteen folios. If you have not yet printed this work, I would request you to do so in large type, that is, in pica, with the headings in long primer. I mention this, because this work on the *The Conduct of Divine Providence*, like the *Theological Treatises*, has cost me great labor, and both are highly appreciated by the public. They contain much beautiful instruction, which will please the learned. If, then, they were to appear in diminutive volumes, the purchasers would quickly turn their backs upon them.

You need not inconvenience yourself to send me copies of them, as you did of my former works. I wish to see them printed for the benefit of the people. Let me know whether you received the *Conduct of Divine Providence*, also, when you receive the one I am about sending, *The Theological Treatises*. If you do not get it within three or four months, let me know, for I fear Moschini will not forward it. In case you do not receive it, tell me by what other way I can send it. I am thus solicitous, because many would like to have this last work of mine, which cost me so much labor, and which, I think, is very useful.

I have, moreover, sent you the work: *Reflections*, which contains three parts: the first, *Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ;* the second, *Various Spiritual Reflections;* the third, *Against the Deists, now Triumphant in France, Flanders, and Italy.* If you have not yet printed this third part of the work, I would ask you to do so separately and in pica characters.

This little book may be of great use to holy religion, for I have collected its contents from different sources. It is the very pith and kernel of what many authors have written, and is very complete.

Pardon the weariness I cause you, and relieve my mind by letting me hear soon that you have received this letter. I shall not annoy you further.

With sentiments of profound respect, I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

[*P. S.*] One word more. There was once published a little book on the "Way of the Cross", the work of an anonymous writer, a religious of the Friars Minor of the Strict Observance, containing three methods of performing this pious exercise. The book was printed at your establishment in 1751. If you find any copies of it, be so kind as to send me two, enclosing them in an envelope as they are small.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 303.

To the Same.

He acknowledges the receipt of a letter, and begs to be informed when the last two works will be finished.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, October 9, 1776.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your last letter in which you tell me that you send me a copy of Noghera. I have sent word to Cervone to inform me as soon as he receives the package from you.

I should like to know for my own consolation, when you will have the last two works, or at least one of them, printed. You need not, however, as I mentioned before, send me any copies, as I already have some.

Take good care of yourself. I pray our dear Lord to grant you success in all your temporal affairs, and, likewise,

in the concerns of your soul. With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 304.

To the Same.

He asks for a copy of the *Translation of the Psalms*, and expresses his fears that this, like other works sent to the publisher, may not have been printed.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, October 17, 1776.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have to inform you that owing to the ready sale it met with among the priests and religious here in Naples, there are no more copies to be had of my *Translation of the Psalms*. So great was the demand that only one old copy remains.

I should like to know whether the work has been printed at your establishment. I am certain that I sent it to you; but I fear that it has not yet been printed. Like so many other works that I sent you (I speak of my latest ones), it may have been laid aside. Speaking in particular of this *Translation of the Psalms*, of which the copies of the Neapolitan edition are already sold, I want to know whether you have printed it. If you have I should like you to send a number of copies to your agent at Naples, Don Antonio

Cervone, from whom I could then procure those that have been asked of me by my friends.

With sentiments of profound respect, I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 305.

To the Same.

He thanks him for beginning to print two of his works, and speaks of their usefulness. He asks for some copies of the *Moral*, and laments over the prohibition of the *Homo Apostolicus* in Portugal.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, November 15, 1776.

Most Illustrious Sir: I reply to your letter of the 2d instant. I am very anxious to read the work of Noghera which you praise so highly; but up to the present, I have not received any information of its arrival at Signor Cervone's.

I thank you for having begun to print the *Victories of the Martyrs*, and I am especially pleased that you have begun also the *Conduct of Divine Providence*. This latter work, though small, is, in my opinion, very useful for the glory of our holy faith on account of its collation of the facts of the Old and New Testaments, which it places in juxtaposition, thus demonstrating the truthfulness of our faith now so impiously attacked by unbelievers, and particularly

by the Deists who have ruined France, Germany, Italy, and the whole of Europe.

The *Theological Treatises*, also, it seems to me, is a work of great utility in reviving the truths of our faith; for it proves from Holy Scripture that this earth will one day come to an end, consumed by fire, and involving the eternal ruin of so many millions of souls who are perishing in the general corruption of morals prevalent in our times.

I cannot give you any more works for publication, for my head has deserted me. I have, therefore, been very anxious that you should print these two last works of mine, though I seek nothing herein but the glory of God and the welfare of the Church now persecuted on all sides,—a sign that the day of Judgment is not far distant.

As far as I know, there is not at Naples a single copy of the last edition [1] of my *Moral* to be had. Send some, therefore, I pray you, to Signor Cervone, or to any other bookseller. Among all the works on Moral Theology sold here, my *Moral*, and especially this last edition is the one most sought after by confessors. I understand that in Rome, also, my *Moral* is, perhaps, the one most highly prized.

I am, indeed, very sorry that the *Homo Apostolicus* was prohibited in Portugal. If I had any way of doing so, I should ask those learned gentlemen of Portugal the reasons for its prohibition. I am not a follower of the Jesuits; on the contrary, I am opposed to their System, and probably to the greater part of their special teachings. I have not been a pupil of theirs. My greatest grief, however, would be to see my work prohibited by Holy Church; but in Rome, far from being prohibited, it was praised, and received with delight.

[1] The seventh edition.

Pardon my wearisomeness. With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 306.

To the Same.

Advice concerning the shipping of books.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, November 21, 1776.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your letter informing me of the number of various books you are sending me, namely, the *Translation of the Psalms*, the *History of the Heresies*, *Reflections on the Passion*, *etc.* As soon as I receive them, I shall let you know. We shall expect the *Conduct of Divine Providence* and the *Treatises* shortly.

With renewed sentiments of regard,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

[*P. S.*] After writing the above, I received news from Naples that Signor Cervone had already forwarded to our Brother Michele Ilardo the two copies of Noghera's work on the "Power of the Pope" and two copies of the "Way of the Cross",—a present from you. I thank you for your kindness.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 307.

To the Same.

The saint's zeal for the infallibility of the Pope.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, December 4, 1776.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have read Noghera. It is a golden work. I would wish that everyone would read it, particularly the second part, or appendix on the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff. It is because the idea of the infallibilty of the Pope is lost sight of, that we see the Church in so mournful a condition.

I beseech you to endeavor to spread abroad this excellent work as much as you can; for it carries conviction to the mind of every reader. I shall do all in my power to further its sale. I am very sorry that, by reason of my paralytic condition, I cannot go to Naples; still I shall do what I can.

I would ask you to see that it reaches His Holiness, for he can find various means of securing its diffusion. I thank you very much for sending it to me, and I shall pray God to have it purchased and read on all sides.

With sentiments of profound respect,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

[*P. S.*] I have, also, in readiness a work treating of the *Infallibility of the Pope.* But seeing that both my Congregation and myself are so persecuted by the evil-minded, I am afraid to have it published. I fear rousing still greater persecution on the part of the modern learned, who are working so diligently to crush out the infallibility of the Pope,—the foundation-stone on which the Church rests according to the words of Jesus Christ: *super hanc petram*

ædificabo ecclesiam meam [upon this rock I will build my Church]. Take away the foundation-stone, and the fall of the Church is inevitable. Alas! this is what men are trying to do nowadays, to the unspeakable grief of all the truly faithful.

In my work, *The Truth of Faith*, I have written very much on the infallibility of the Pope; but in the work alluded to, which I have not published for fear of the consequences, I think I have proved the point in question, more clearly than even Father Zaccaria, Father Noghera, or the rest. If I must publish it, I should prefer to do so under an assumed name.[1]

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

[1] It seems probable that this work was subsequently published; for six months after the date of this letter, the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VI., addressed to the saint a Brief thanking him for the work, which, though borne down by the weight of years, he had written in defence of the Holy See. (See Letter of June 19, 1777.) We do not know of any other work of the saint published at that age. It is not rash, therefore, to suppose in the absence of other information, either that, being published under an assumed name, as the saint says he will do in this letter, its author remained unknown; or that it has been lost,—a fate which certainly befell another work of his published in 1765, under the title: "Reflections on the Declaration of the Gallican Clergy on the Infallibility of the Pope." This work is mentioned by Father Tannoia ("Life", vol. iii. chap. xxv.), but to the present all search for it has proved unavailing.

LETTER 308.

To the Same.

His joy at the success of the *Homo Apostolicus* notwithstanding the prohibition against it.—Advice with regard to a new edition of the *Moral*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

[NOCERA DE' PAGANI, end of December, 1776.]

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your most esteemed letter of the 7th instant. In my last I informed you that I had received Noghera's work, which pleases me very much. When you write again, be so kind as to give me some particulars concerning this learned man.

I shall expect to see the two latest of my works when they are finished. I would especially recommend you to send a very large number of copies of the *Conduct of Divine Providence* to Signor Cervone at Naples, for the Neapolitan edition is completely exhausted.

With regard to the *Moral*, and in particular the *Homo Apostolicus*, I was very deeply pained, as I wrote you, to learn that they were prohibited in Portugal. But you afford me great consolation by telling me that, notwithstanding the prohibition, the latter work is selling well there. I am also pleased to know that a new reprint of the same is nearly finished;[1] for to tell the truth, and not because the work is mine, among all the books on Moral Theology it is the most useful, and of all those now in use, it is, perhaps, the best for the instruction of seminarists.

A word now about the large *Moral*. I understand that it has already been reprinted as far as the second volume inclusive. Had I been aware that this work was going on, I might probably have spared you more than ten folios of

[1] A fourth edition of the "Homo Apostolicus" was published in 1777.

paper, by directing you to omit the pages at the beginning, from page xl. to lxxvi.[1] According to my new System as enunciated in the *Monitum*,[2] all these pages are now worth little or nothing. They were of service once in the System of the Jesuits to which I adhered in part. [*A few words are missing.*] But as you tell me that only the third volume remains to be printed,[3] I suppose all these pages, which belong at the beginning, are already finished. If, then, they could be entirely omitted, I should be very much pleased; for some have criticised my *Moral* because, from these pages at the beginning, they thought that I maintained the System of the Jesuits. This, however, is not true; for when there is question of the choice of opinions, I maintain the *more probable one*.[4]

Now I come to the *Monitum*. In one of the copies of the last edition of the *Moral*, I found this *Monitum* at the end of the second volume. In another of the same edition, I have not been able to find it at all, though I have examined the book from cover to cover. I am afraid that the *Monitum* was either lost among the printed matter, or that your men in forwarding the books to Naples, forgot to put it in. To make sure that this *Monitum* will not be omitted from the *Moral*, I send you a copy with the request to have it inserted at once, not, however, at the end of the second volume, but at the end of the complete work, after the *Epitome* of Benedict XIV.[5] This *Monitum* is short, and will require only a single

1 The *Dissertatio Prolegomena* of Father Zaccaria.

2 To which allusion was made in the note to Letter 263, p. 57.

3 So the saint thought; but the eighth edition which he imagined so far advanced, did not appear till 1779. His recommendation is, therefore, useless.

4 That is the *more probable* in contradistinction to the *less probable*, in the sense so often enunciated by the saint, and of which we spoke in the note to Letter 185, vol. iv. p. 363.

5 The *Monitum* was not lost, and was inserted in the other copies of the seventh edition. The saint did, indeed, dread its loss, for so

folio; but I make more account of that single sheet than of any other that might be missing, for it has cost me much fatigue to compose it, and in it I make clear the System of Moral Theology that I maintain. Once more, I beseech you to insert this *Monitum* at the end of the work, after the *Epitome,* in other words, at the very last page. Placed in the middle, it is as good as lost since no one sees it, but at the end, it commands attention, for everyone turns to see the end of a work. It would be better if it could be placed at the very beginning of the work, before the main text of the *Moral* begins, for here, too, everybody would notice it. Still, if it cannot be inserted at the beginning, put it at the end as I have requested.

There is yet another point to mention, a very important one pertaining to parish priests. This point is found in the *Homo Apostolicus*, and I sent it also in a note for the large *Moral,* but I have not found it there. At present, I cannot send this little addition (it is indeed very small), as I must first copy it. I shall send it to you shortly. This note must likewise be inserted at the end of the third volume, with the title: *Adjectio.* It should have been added to the second volume, but that, as I perceive, being already printed, it must be inserted in the last.

Not wishing to weary you further, I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

much account did he make of it that he wrote later that he would not die happy if it were not inserted in the *Moral.* When he read it in the eighth edition, as a part of his *Moral System etc.*, he wrote that he could die content now that his *Moral* was *complete.*

LETTER 309.

To the Members of the Royal Chamber of Santa Chiara. [1]

He defends his *Moral Theology* against the accusations made against it to the Royal Chamber.

[NOCERA, end of March, 1777.]

I understand that the Fiscal Advocate, Signor de Leone, has attacked my *Moral Theology* in a *memorial* humbly submitted to His Majesty, our Lord the King, and transmitted to your eminent body for examination. The *memorial* in question treats of certain differences between Signor Don Niccolò Sarnelli, Baron of Ciorani, and the Missionary Priests of whom His Most August Majesty Carlo III., King of Spain, by a special decree constituted me Superior, when he was at the head of this realm. Signor Leone's charges are, that I am a follower of the Jesuits; that in my

[1] This letter, or rather this Defence was at first included by the saint in another, more general and of greater length, composed for the purpose of refuting the false accusations insolently launched against the Congregation by Signor Niccolò Sarnelli, Baron of Ciorani, in the famous suit of which mention was so frequently made in the first part of this *Correspondence*. But perceiving later that the charges against his *Moral Theology* on the ground of following the Jesuits, were made the most powerful and successful weapon against him, as in those turbulent times the very name of Jesuit, suppressed though the Society was, sufficed to call forth the most unjust and serious condemnation, the saint thought it better to separate this question of the *Moral* from the others at issue, and treat it with greater attention, making it so clear that it might be at once recognised and understood. This is the purpose of the present letter, or Defence. In a separate Defence he embraces all the other charges not of a scientific nature. He thus composed (it is worth the reader's while to note) at the advanced age of eighty years, three *memorials* of the same general character as the Defence here given. It is easy to surmise the labor these *memorials* cost the saint weighed down by years. He himself writes in a letter to Father Paola: "I have had to compose, also, a defence for our suit, many folios in length. It is a miracle that I have not had a stroke of apoplexy!" —*Gen. Corresp.* vol. iii. p. 210.

Moral Theology I maintain *Probabilism;* and that, on account of my writings, I am worse than Arius, for my teaching overthrows all moral science. Again, my doctrine, he says, "attacks the sovereignty and security of His Majesty, the King". Thirdly: my doctrine is "pernicious", and he is "speaking in defence of the morality of the Gospel". He then proceeds to denounce many particular teachings contained in my work.

To answer all these charges distinctly, I shall, in the first part of this paper, treat of the general points of accusation; in the second, I shall speak of the particular ones.

PART FIRST.

On the Two General Charges, namely, My Adherence to the Doctrine of the Jesuits, and the System of Probabilism that I maintain.

With regard to being a follower of the teaching of the Jesuits, in my published works I have declared myself their opponent in Moral, as appears from my *Theology*, as well as in Dogmatic Theology, for in my dogmatic work on the *Council of Trent* (*Sess.* vi.), in a treatise which I composed: *On the Manner in which Grace acts* (§ 2. p. 109, n. 110 sq.), I have taken a position contrary to the teachings of the Jesuits.

With regard to the second general accusation, that I maintain the System of Probabilism, in many of the works printed by me I have rejected *Probabilism*, and have shown that we cannot, with a good conscience, act upon a probable opinion merely because it is probable; for the mere probability of an opinion in favor of liberty does not give a sufficient motive to act licitly, since to act licitly a moral certitude of the goodness of our action is required, and this certitude cannot be deduced from the mere probability of an opinion.

It is true, I admit, that at one time I did say that in the concurrence of two equally probable opinions the law does not oblige. But I have since repeatedly declared that just as we cannot follow the probable opinion, so we cannot embrace the equi-probable opinion in favor of liberty, since the equi-probable opinion, not having more weight than the probable, does not give sufficient foundation to act licitly. This I have taught in three of my works, and particularly in a *Monitum* [1] added to the seventh edition of my *Moral Theology* printed at Venice.

All that I have said in my late works upon morals, and particularly in my *Theology*, which was revised and approved at Naples by the censors of Church and State, and printed in five editions at Venice, is this: "When there are two equally probable opinions, one of which is in favor of the law, and the other in favor of liberty, the law is not promulgated; in that case, only the opinion in favor of the law is promulgated, but not the law itself, and when a law is not promulgated, it cannot bind."

This doctrine that the law, in order to have binding force, must be promulgated, is not mine only. It is the common teaching of all the theologians, not only of the Probabilists, but also of the Probabiliorists, and of St. Thomas, a declared Doctor of the Church and the Master of all the Catholic Schools. St. Thomas teaches this doctrine not in one passage only, but repeatedly, as I shall show in the course of my remarks.

First of all, the Angelic Doctor teaches the following: "A law is, as it were, a rule or measure of actions by which one is either incited to act or refrain from acting. It is called law (a bond) from *ligare* to bind, because it binds

[1] The *Monitum* of which mention has been made in Letters 263 and 308.

one to act." [1] He then goes on to say that in order that men be obliged to conform to this rule or measure, as he styles the law, it must be applied to them by being made known to them by means of a promulgation. Here are the very words of the saint in which the point of his teaching lies: "The law is brought to bear after the manner of a rule or measure. Now, a rule or measure is brought into use by being applied to those things which are to be adjusted or measured. Wherefore that the law may obtain binding force, which is its peculiar property, it must needs be applied to man, who is to be regulated according to it. This application takes place when the law is brought to man's knowledge through promulgation. Promulgation, therefore, is necessary for the law to have binding force."[2]

Still, as I have remarked, this is not only the doctrine of St. Thomas; it is the teaching of all the theologians as well. In particular is it taught by Gerson, the most renowned theologian of France, who says that for a law to bind, it must necessarily be made known to man; otherwise, says he, God could not oblige man to observe it. His words are: "There must of necessity be some manifestation of the divine will and ordination, for by a mere ordination, or by a simple willing, God cannot absolutely place any obligation on the creature; to do this, he must communicate to

[1] "Lex quædam regula est et mensura actuum, secundum quam inducitur aliquis ad agendum, vel ab agendo retrahitur. Dicitur enim lex a ligando, quia obligat ad agendum."—1, 2, *qu.* 90, *art.* i.

[2] "Lex imponitur per modum regulæ et mensuræ; regula autem et mensura imponitur per hoc quod applicatur his, quæ regulantur et mensurantur. Unde ad hoc quod lex virtutem obligandi obtineat, quod est proprium legis, oportet quod applicetur hominibus, qui secundum eam regulari debent. Talis autem applicatio fit per hoc, quod in notitiam eorum deducitur ex ipsa promulgatione. Unde promulgatio ipsa necessaria est ad hoc quod lex habeat suam virtutem."—1, 2, *qu.* 90, *art.* iv.

the creature the knowledge of the one as well as of the other." [1]

Cardinal Gotti teaches the same thing: "In order that the law may oblige in a concrete instance, it is indispensably necessary that it be made known to the subjects of the law by promulgation." [2] Gonet says: "Man is not obliged to conform to the divine will, except when it is made known to him by a precept." [3] Louis Habert writes: "Promulgation and binding force are contained in the idea of law," [4]—that is to say, the law has no binding force unless it is promulgated. Dominicus Soto speaks thus: "No law has any force of law whatever before promulgation, but it becomes a law only when it is promulgated. And to this general rule there is no exception." [5] Innumerable other authors say precisely the same thing; but worthy of special consideration is what my principal antagonist, Father Patuzzi, writes. Speaking of this very subject, the promulgation of the law, he has not hesitated to say: "All agree that promulgation is absolutely necessary in order that the law may have binding force." [6]

1 "Necesse est, dari manifestationem ordinationis ac voluntatis Dei; nam per solam ordinationem, aut per solam voluntatem non potest Deus absolute creaturæ imponere obligationem; sed ad hoc opus est, ut ei communicet notitiam unius æque ac alterius."—*De vita spirit. etc., lect.* 2.

2 "Ad hoc ut lex in actu secundo obliget, requiritur quidem indispensabiliter ut subditis promulgatione proponatur."—*Theol. tom.* 2, *tract.* 5, *de Leg. qu.* 1, *dub.* 3, § 3, *n.* 18.

3 "Homo non tenetur conformari voluntati divinæ, nisi quando voluntas divina nobis præcepto manifestatur."—*Clyp., tom.* 3, *tract.* 3.

4 "Ad rationem legis pertinet promulgatio, et vis obligandi."

5 "Nulla lex ullum habet vigorem legis ante promulgationem, sed tunc instituuntur cum promulgantur. Itaque nullam exceptionem conclusio hæc permittit."—*De Just. et jure, lib.* 1, *qu.* 1, *art.* 4.

6 "Consentiunt quidem omnes, promulgationem esse omnino necessariam, ut lex virtutem obligandi obtineat."—*Theol. mor. de Leg., cap.* 1, *n.* 7.

Now, when is a law understood to be promulgated? Sylvius answers the question and says that, strictly speaking, the law is promulgated to each one, when he perceives the dictate of conscience telling him what he must do and what he must avoid: "Really the law is then promulgated to the individual when he receives from God the knowledge which points out to him what, in accordance with right reason, he must do or avoid." [1] Gerson teaches the same thing in the place quoted above when he says: "This law is, as it were, a declaration made to the creature, by which he learns how God looks upon certain acts which he wishes to oblige the creature either to perform or to leave undone." [2] Wherefore St. Thomas teaches that this law, to have binding force, must be certain.[3] The reason of this is, that since the law is a rule or measure according to which we must regulate our actions, we cannot do this if the measure or rule is uncertain, as Pietro Collet writes. "That the law may oblige, it must be applied as a rule, and, therefore, must be made known. Now, the law is not made known except by promulgation, since by this means alone is it intimated in the manner which imposes the necessity of obedience." [4]

Again St. Thomas, in another place, confirms this doctrine that, in order to bind, the law must be promulgated and certain. He says, as we saw in the preceding, that the

[1] "Actualiter tunc unicuique (lex) promulgatur quando cognitionem a Deo accipit, dictantem quid juxta rectam rationem sit amplectendum, quid fugiendum."—Sylvius, 1, 2, *qu.* 90, *art.* 4, *in fine.*

[2] "Lex ista est quædam declaratio creaturæ facta, per quam illa cognoscit quid Deus de certis rebus judicet, ad quas vel præstandas, vel omittendas, ipse creaturam obligare vult."

[3] 1, 2, *qu.* 19, *art.* 4, *ad* 3.

[4] "Lex enim, ut obliget, debet dari ut regula, ac proinde innotescere; atqui lex non innotescit, nisi per promulgationem, cum per eam solam eo intimetur modo, qui obediendi necessitatem inducit." —*Theol. mor. tom.* 1 *de Leg., cap.* 1, *a.* 2, *concl.* 2.

law is so called from *ligare* to bind, because it binds us to act; and then in the place to which we now refer, he says that the law is, as it were, a chain or bond, which does not bind unless it is actually applied to the thing to be bound. Here are his very words: "The power of a master stands in the same relation to binding in those matters which are voluntary,—after the manner in which the will may be bound,—as the physical action to the binding of things material. Now the action of a physical agent never induces a necessity upon another object except it comes in physical contact with that upon which it acts. In like manner, therefore, no one is bound by the power of a master unless that power comes in contact with him who is commanded; and this takes place when he learns of the command." [1] St. Thomas, therefore, says that the knowledge of the law is like a chain or bond which binds the will of man; and from this he concludes that no one is obliged to observe any precept if he has no knowledge or certain cognition of that precept. "No one, therefore," he says, "is bound by any law unless he has a knowledge of that law." [2] Thus St. Thomas in the passage quoted. Wherefore, just as he that is free from bonds, is at liberty to go whithersoever he will, so is he free from all obligation who is not bound by any certain precept forbidding this or that action.

Thirdly, this doctrine of St. Thomas is further confirmed in another place where the Angelic Doctor proposes the

1 "Ita se habet imperium alicujus gubernantis ad ligandum in rebus voluntariis, illo modo ligationis qui voluntati accidere potest, sicut se habet actio corporalis ad ligandum res corporales. Actio autem corporalis agentis nunquam inducit necessitatem in rem aliam, nisi per contactum coactionis ipsius ad rem in quam agit. Unde nec ex imperio alicujus domini ligatur aliquis, nisi imperium attingat ipsum cui imperatur. Attingit autem ipsum per scientiam." —*Opusc. de Verit., qu.* 17, *a.* 3.

2 "Unde nullus ligatur per præceptum aliquod, nisi mediante scientia illius præcepti."—*Ibid.*

question: Whether we are obliged to conform in all things to the divine will; and he answers that we are not obliged to conform to the particular dispositions of God in our regard which are unknown to us. "We do not know what are the particular dispositions of God's will; and with regard to them we are not obliged to conform to the divine will." [1] Father Gonet explains this more in detail, thus: "Man is not bound to conform to the divine will, except when that will is made known to him by a precept." [2] So that we are not obliged to fulfil a command if it is not made known to us.

Finally, St. Thomas confirms this doctrine still more forcibly in another place. I have wished to mention here the principle passages in which the holy Doctor teaches that the law does not bind if it is not promulgated and made known to us by a divine precept, because upon this doctrine, universally accepted by theologians, as we have seen above, rests my own System, namely, that the law or precept must be certain and manifest in order to have binding force. The Angelic Doctor, I say, confirms this doctrine in another place. He proposes the question: Whether we must obey God in everything; and he answers in the affirmative, but in his response to the third objection he says that man is not always obliged to will what God wills, except when the divine will is made known to him in a divine precept. His words are: "To the third objection we say that, although man is not always obliged to will what God wills, he is, nevertheless, obliged to will what God wishes him to will; and this is made known to him

[1] "Sed in particulari nescimus quid Deus velit; et quantum ad hoc, non tenemur conformare voluntatem nostram divinæ voluntati."—1, 2, *qu.* 19, *art.* 10, *ad* 1.

[2] "Homo non tenetur conformari voluntati divinæ, nisi quando voluntas divina nobis præcepto manifestatur."—*Clyp. tom.* iii. *tract.* 3, *disp.* 6, *a.* 2, *n.* 37 *in fine.*

principally by a divine precept." [1] The holy Doctor, then, teaches that man is not always bound to will what God wills, but is always bound to will what God wants him to will. Now, how shall we know that God wills this or that thing? We shall know it, says St. Thomas, when God makes known to us by his precept what we must will: "and this is made known to him principally by a divine precept". Hence, it follows that, so long as the divine precept is not manifested to us, we are not obliged to do what God wills. To sum up, then, these passages of St. Thomas and the other authors, which I have adduced, prove that when the law is not made known, we are not obliged to observe it.

PART SECOND.

The Particular Objections of the Fiscal Advocate's Memorial against my Moral Theology.

In the first place, the Fiscal Advocate objects as follows,—I quote his own words: "He proposes the question: Whether it is allowed to employ craftiness, as well in speech as in manner of acting, so that he that listens or looks on, may be deceived. He divides the question into two parts; in the first he asks: Whether, for a just reason, it is allowable to use deceit in speech in order to deceive others, and whether it is allowable to confirm such deceptive speech with an oath. This question he answers affirmatively, after the manner of the Jesuits. And wishing to define what would be a sufficient reason to justify this lie and this perjury, he says any good reason whatever tending to the utility of body or mind will suffice." He then cites the place in my *Moral Theology: lib. 3, tract. 2, de Præcept. Decal., cap. xi. de juramento, dub. 4.*

Then, going over to the question of equivocation, he says:

1 "Ad tertium dicendum quod, etsi non semper teneatur homo velle quod Deus vult, semper tamen tenetur velle quod Deus vult eum velle: et hoc homini præcipue innotescit per præceptum divinum."—2, 2, *qu.* 104, *art.* 4, *ad* 3.

"In the second part, he proposes another question [let me say, however, it is the very same]: Whether he who deceives another by equivocal language even under oath, commits a mortal sin; and although some of the Jesuits have maintained the affirmative, he frankly confesses that he holds the negative, saying that we cannot call the deception of another by false and equivocal speech, even when there is no reason for such use, a mortal sin [equivocation, let me remark, is to use words that may be understood in a two-fold sense, but not to speak falsehood; in the beginning he called this to employ craftiness, and shortly after he openly terms it lying], provided this deception is not practised in law-suits or in contracts, for to be free from mortal sin in these cases, he says a justifying reason is necessary,—what this reason would be, we have seen in the definition already given."

In reply I say that, although some Jesuits, as Viva, Toletus, Busenbaum, and others hold that it is a mortal sin to swear to equivocal speech without a just reason, there are others, such as Cardinal Cajetan,[1] de Lugo,[2] and especially the theologians of Salamanca,[3] with Castropalaus, Soto, Valencia, Prado, Candidus, and others, who more commonly teach that in such a case there is no grievous sin. This opinion has appeared to me quite conformable to the truth; for in an oath of this kind, taken not to a falsehood but to equivocal language which is understood by him who swears, we find truth and justice; all that is missing is judgment or discretion, but according to the common opinion of theologians this defect constitutes only a venial sin. Moreover, in this instance, the speaker does not deceive another; he simply permits his deception on ac-

[1] Cajet., *in* 2, 2, *qu.* 89, *art.* 7, *ad* 4, *dub.* 2.
[2] De Lugo, *De Fide*, *D.* 4, *n.* 64.
[3] Salmant., *Tract.* 17, *De Juram*,, *cap.* 2, *n.* 108.

count of the hearer's heedlessness in not noticing the equivocation which is easily perceptible. This doctrine, however, does not obtain when there is question of law-suits or contracts; for then it is certainly a grievous sin to swear to an equivocation for any private advantage without a just cause, and in these cases that cause must be very grave.

In the second place, the Fiscal Advocate goes on to speak of mental reservation, and in the course of his remarks about me, says: "According to his teaching it is permissible to reply to the interrogatories of a judge, with mental reservation, even under oath, so that we appear to affirm with our lips what we inwardly deny. Accordingly a person interrogated as to whether he had done a certain act, though guilty, can, nevertheless, answer that he has not, provided he mentally says that he did not do it under such and such circumstances, or at such a time."

At number 152, where I am speaking not of equivocal language, but of mental reservation, I have said that we must distinguish between reservation purely mental, and that which is not purely so. A reservation is purely mental when our neighbor can in no way perceive the equivocation, as for instance, if a man were to deny having done something that he really did, mentally understanding that he did not do another thing which he did not do. This is a purely mental reservation, and is not permissible at all either with or without oath, as was declared by Innocent XI. in the twenty-sixth proposition condemned by him. The reservation is not purely mental when from circumstances our neighbor can argue well enough that we speak, understanding in our mind something other than what we say; as, for example, if a man knows something under the seal of secrecy, he may licitly say that he does not know it, meaning that he does not know it with power to make it manifest. This is permissible, and even under oath, as

theologians commonly teach with Dominicus Soto,[1] Adrian,[2] Cajetan,[3] Sylvester,[4] Navarre,[5] and Cardinal Gotti.

We have an instance of this kind in the case of Jesus Christ, who when speaking of the day of Judgment said: *But of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father.*[6] Here theologians inquire how Jesus Christ could say that he knew nothing of the day of Judgment, since St. Paul says that in Jesus are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God: *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*[7] The Fathers explain this by saying that Jesus Christ here speaks with a mental reservation, meaning that he did not know it with permission to communicate his knowledge to his disciples. Thus, St. Thomas says: "He is said not to know it, because he does not make them know it," [8]—that is, he said he did not know it to be communicated to others; and St. Augustine says even more clearly: "For he does not know that of which he leaves them in ignorance, that is, what he did not know with permission to reveal then to his disciples." [9] In the same way is this passage explained by St. Jerome, St.

[1] Soto, *De Justit. et Jure, lib.* 5, *qu.* 6, *a.* 2.

[2] Adrian, 4 *sent., qu. de Sig. confess.*

[3] Cajet., *Opusc.* 16, *Resp. qu.* 5.

[4] Sylvester, *verb. Mendac., qu.* 6, § 4, *et verb. Juram., qu.* 2, § *Liceat.*

[5] Navarre, *Man., cap.* 12, *ex n.* 8, *et cap.* 18, *n.* 61, *et cap.* 25, *n.* 94.

[6] "De die autem illo, vel hora nemo scit, neque angeli in cœlo, neque Filius, nisi Pater."—*Mark*, xiii. 32.

[7] "In quo (Christo Jesu) sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ, et scientiæ absconditi."—*Col.* ii. 3.

[8] "Dicitur nescire diem, quia non facit scire."—3, *qu.* 10, *a.* 2, *ad* 1.

[9] "Hoc enim nescit, quod nescire facit, id est quod non ita sciebat, ut tunc discipulis indicaret."—*Lib.* 1, *de Trinit., cap.* 12, *n.* 23.

Chrysostom, St. Athanasius, St. Hilary, and St. Basil quoted by Suarez.[1]

In like manner Jesus said on another occasion to his disciples: *Go you up to this festival day, but I go not up to this festival day.*[2] Still St. John afterward tells us that Jesus did go up to the festival: *But after his brethren were gone up, then he also went up to the feast.*[3] Interpreters explain this equivocal expression by saying that when he said "I go not up"—he must be understood as meaning "I go not up openly"; for when our Lord did go up to the festival, he went secretly, as we must gather from the circumstances. Here, then, we have two reservations not purely mental, made by Jesus Christ himself, which, according to the strict sense of the words spoken at the time, appear to be lies, but were only equivocal expressions. When, therefore, there is a just cause, it is permissible to answer and even to take an oath to an equivocation, that is, to a reservation not purely mental, as all the theologians quoted commonly teach; for in that case there is no offence against the truth.

In a third charge the Fiscal Advocate speaking of what I say in my *Moral Theology* at page 119, number 154, says: "Here he is speaking of witnesses, and teaches that a witness unlawfully questioned by a judge, can swear that he has no knowledge of a crime of which he really knows, meaning that he knows nothing of the crime concerning which inquiry may be lawfully made, or that he knows nothing to testify. And wishing to define exactly when the interrogatories of a judge are not lawful, he says this hap-

1 Suarez, *in* 3 *Part. S. Thom., qu.* 10, *ad* 2 *in fine.*

2 "Vos ascendite ad diem festum hunc, ego autem non ascendo ad diem festum istum."—*John*, vii. 8.

3 "Ut autem ascenderunt fratres ejus, tunc et ipse ascendit ad diem festum."—*Ibid.* vii. 10.

pens when he inquires concerning a crime that is not public."

In reply to this let me say that we must distinguish a crime that is not public from an occult crime; since in an occult crime, as we shall see presently, the witness is not bound to tell what he knows; on the other hand, when the crime is not public, he may in many instances be obliged to tell what he knows.—Here the Advocate enters upon another and very different question, namely: Whether the witness who reveals to the judge the occult crime of another, commits a mortal sin.

For the sake of clearness, I shall first answer the first question, and then pass on to the other. With regard to the question: Which are the cases in which a judge does not inquire legitimately, and in which, consequently, a witness is not obliged to tell what he knows, I shall content myself with quoting what St. Thomas teaches. Here are his words: "Without doubt, the witness is bound to give testimony whenever such testimony is required of him in accordance with the law, as in public crimes, and in those whose infamy has spread abroad. But if this testimony is asked of him in other cases, for example, in occult crimes or in those which have not become publicly known, he is not bound to testify." [1] The holy Doctor, then, teaches that the witness is not obliged to make known to the judge what he, the witness, may know, when the judge interrogates not in accordance with the law, as is the case when he makes inquiries concerning occult crimes or simply concerning those from which no infamy has proceeded. In

[1] "Non est dubium, quin teneatur testimonium ferre in his, in quibus, secundum ordinem juris, testimonium ab eo exigitur, puta in manifestis, et in his de quibus infamia præcessit. Si autem exigitur ab eo testimonium in aliis, puta in occultis et de quibus infamia non præcessit, non tenetur ad testificandum."—2, 2, *qu.* 70, *art.* 1.

this teaching the Angelic Doctor is followed generally by the other theologians, as Cardinal Cajetan,[1] Sporer,[2] Azor, [3] Roncaglia,[4] Sanchez,[5] and the theologians of Salamanca.[6]

Speaking of the second question: Whether a witness who reveals to the judge the occult crime of another, commits a mortal sin, the Fiscal Advocate censures what I have written, namely: "If the crime is occult, for then the witness may say that the accused did not commit the crime, he is even obliged to do so, because in such a case the judge is not making an inquiry lawfully." He takes exception to my answer that the witness is obliged (if the crime is altogether occult) to say that the accused did not commit it, although Cardenas, Tamburini and Potestà teach this, and by these words they wish to say in short that the witness is obliged to conceal the crime of the guilty person. To me, however, this doctrine seems perfectly correct; for just as he who unnecessarily makes known the occult sin of his neighbor, commits a sin, so too he sins grievously who makes known to the judge the crime of another when that crime is entirely occult; he sins even more grievously on account of the injury done to his neighbor by his testimony, for then the judge (as has been explained above) makes inquiries illegitimately, and as the witness is not bound in such a case to reveal the truth, he commits a sin if having it in his power to conceal the truth, he makes it known.

Furthermore, the Fiscal Advocate alleges: "But this is not enough. He goes on to the second question: Whether a witness who under oath deceives the judge, can be excused from mortal sin, and this is how he answers it: 'By

1 Cajetan, *Opusc. tom.* 1, *tract.* 31, *Resp.* 5.

2 Sporer, *De 2 præcept., cap.* 2, *n.* 120, 121.

3 Azor, *Tom.* 1, *lib.* ii. *cap.* 4.

4 Roncaglia, de eodem titulo *cap.* 4, *qu.* 2, *Resp.* 3.

5 Sanchez, *Decal., lib.* 3, *cap.* 6, *n.* 23 *et* 26, with Navarre, Toletus, and others.

6 Salmant., *Tract.* 29 *de offic., cap.* 3, *de testib., n.* 56 *et seq.*

such an oath, which can in nowise be called perjury, the witness has not sinned against commutative justice, but against legal justice and the obedience due to the judge, whose authority is transient, and lasts only as long as the judge continues the interrogatory.'"

To answer this charge properly, I must place the real question in a clear light, so that my answer may be more easily understood. The question is this: "Whether a witness, or even the culprit, who has concealed the truth by speaking in equivocal terms, is thereafter bound to make known the truth under pain of mortal sin?" Some authors say he is; but I hold with Philiarcus,[1] Sanchez,[2] and the theologians of Salamanca in particular,[3] who stoutly maintain it as certainly the truer opinion, that in these circumstances neither the witness nor the culprit is obliged to manifest the truth. The reason for this appears very convincing since such an oath cannot really and strictly be called perjury, as it is not taken to a lie but to an equivocal expression; and although he who swears to this equivocal expression, has sinned grievously, nevertheless he has not sinned against commutative justice, but merely against legal justice on account of the obedience due to the judge. And since the command of the judge is not permanent, but lasts and has binding force only for the time during which he interrogates, once this time is past, the command of the judge no longer binds. Let it be remarked, however, that if the witness or the culprit by such culpable equivocation has injured a third person, he is bound to make good the damage caused; for in that case he sins not only against legal justice in regard to the judge, but in regard to the person injured he sins against commutative justice also by the damage

[1] Philiarc. *de Offic. sacerd. tom.* 1, *P.* 2, *lib.* 4, *cap.* 25.

[2] Sanchez, *De Decal., lib.* 3, *cap.* 7, *num.* 8.

[3] Salmant., *Tract.* 17 *de Juram. tom. iii. cap.* 2, *punct.* 8, § 6, *num.* 147.

caused by his equivocation. He is, consequently, always bound in conscience to repair this damage.

My opponent likewise objects to two other opinions that I advance, corollaries, as he calls them, of the principles set forth by me. He says: "Thus it is said to be allowable to assert any falsehood whatever under oath, provided he who swears professes the truth in a low tone of voice so as not to be understood. It is also taught that one may tell lies before the judge whenever the regular manner of procedure is not observed by him."

My reply is that what I have written in my work, *lib. 3, de 2 præcept, n. 18*, is as follows: "In the eighth place it is asked: Whether it is allowable to swear to a falsehood, provided one adds in a low tone of voice a true circumstance? Hurtado, Prado, and others answer in the affirmative, because, say they, for speech to be truthful it is sufficient that externally it agree with the idea in the mind, whether this idea be expressed by signs or in a low tone of voice, and it is only *per accidens* that another does not perceive it." But after these words I add: "The theologians of Salamanca (*cap. 2, n. 138*), however, more properly admit this only in case the low tone of voice may in some way be perceived by others, although the sense therein conveyed be not understood; but they do not admit it if the tone of voice is entirely imperceptible." I do not, then, approve of the opinion when the truth is professed by him who is under oath in so low a voice as not to be understood; for then the truth is told only in a manner that is completely hidden from others. I do admit this opinion with the theologians of Salamanca, in that instance only in which, as they say, the low tone of voice may in some way be perceived by others, although the sense therein conveyed be not understood.

He has another objection to this same citation: "It is also taught that one may tell lies before the judge whenever

the regular manner of procedure is not observed by him." To this objection I have already answered with St. Thomas, that, when the order of judicial procedure is not observed, so that the judge does not conduct the interrogatory lawfully, or when the crime is occult, or when it has not produced public infamy, or when there are no evident indications as some authors rightly assert, — then, says St. Thomas, and with him all theologians, the witness is not obliged to answer. In these cases, he is not obliged to tell the truth in an intelligible voice, but may licitly conceal it. Excepted always are cases of heresy or those which affect the welfare of the community at large.

The last objection that the Fiscal Advocate brings against me is a proposition inserted in my *Moral Theology* at line 5, number 170, which, however, is not mine but one of Father Busenbaum's. It is as follows: "He who outwardly swears without the intention of swearing, is not bound by the oath, except, perhaps, by reason of the scandal given; because he has not sworn, but simply feigned to swear. Still in public court he can be forced to stand by such an oath", and then other authors are cited.

Here let me say, that although he who swears without the intention of taking an oath, certainly commits a sin, as is declared by Innocent XI. in the condemnation of the twenty-fifth proposition, nevertheless, bearing in mind that such a one does swear without the intention of taking an oath, Busenbaum was unquestionably right in saying that he is not bound to keep his promise. The reason for this, as the theologians of Salamanca and the generality of authors teach—and their opinion is the more probable one —is, that an oath taken without the intention of swearing is not really an oath. It lacks the necessary condition to the nature of a promise, namely, the intention of promising, and, therefore, as the promise is void, the oath, which is of the same nature, is also void. Busenbaum, however,

failed to remark one thing in his proposition, namely, that although he who swears without the intention of doing so, is not bound to keep his promise, he is, nevertheless, always bound to repair the injury to a third person. To this obligation I have called particular attention a little further on, number 172, at the end of an addition which I made there: *Quæritur*, and in which with other authors I teach, as follows: "An exception is rightly made if the oath is taken in the matter of contracts, or before a judge, because then, though it is not perjury, it is a serious act of deceitfulness against justice."

In conclusion, in spite of the diligent examination I have made, it seems to me that in my *Moral Theology* I cannot find that I have approved a single unsound doctrine, or any doctrine opposed to the morality of Jesus Christ, or the public welfare, or the life of the sovereign, as the Fiscal Advocate has charged me with. Nay, in relation to this last point I have stoutly maintained in my works on morals (*Homo Apostolicus*, *tract. 8*, *dc 5 præcept.*, *cap. 2*, *n. 12 seq.*), that it is not lawful to violate the person of rulers, not only when they are in peaceable possession of their throne, but even when they rule after the manner of tyrants, —and in this I am opposed to the opinion of many,—for St. Peter tells us that we should obey our rulers even though they be froward,[1] and, moreover, to judge whether a sovereign possesses his realm justly or unjustly can never appertain to the subjects.

With regard to *Probabilism* and the lax teaching of the Jesuits, charges made by the Fiscal Advocate, I have shown these charges to be utterly false in the foregoing. Whoever examines my *Moral Theology*, will readily see that I adhere to the *more probable opinion*, on which account some have considered me to be a Rigorist, as for example in the opinion I hold with regard to an aspirant to Holy

[1] 1 *Peter*, ii. 18.

Orders who is in the habit of sin. Here I maintain that such a person cannot be absolved unless he gives signs of a special habit of virtue. . . . [*The rest is wanting.*]

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 310.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

Anxious about the reformation of two opinions, he earnestly asks him whether the new edition of the *Moral* has been printed according to his repeated requests.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, April 7, 1777.

Most Illustrious Sir: As I learned that you were printing the eighth edition of my *Moral*, I wrote to you twice, perhaps three times, to let you know that I had retracted two opinions contained in this work, and I begged you for the honor of the work to have them changed. I likewise asked you to let me know when you would publish another edition, as by this time the present will be finished. In short, I should wish you to inform me whether there is still time to arrange these two points in the present edition, or, at least, to let me know when you are about to publish a new edition of the work.

I have written to you two or three times, but have received no answer, for what reason I know not. I beseech you to write me on this matter, that I may know how to act. Let me know also about the state of your health.

I am still dragging out my life in pains and sufferings. I trust I shall soon have the pleasure of receiving a letter

from you. Once more tendering you the offer of my services,

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 311.

To the Same.

He tells him how to direct his letters, and speaks of some slight changes which he is preparing to introduce in the new edition of the *Moral.*

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, May 15, 1777.

Most Illustrious Sir: Your letter of the 6th instant afforded me much pleasure, for not having had any answers to my frequent communications, I feared something had happened. Let me ask you not to direct your letters to Nocera, as letters do not reach me by that way. Send them to Naples, and I shall see that they are taken from the post-office.

I have already begun to note down in a copy of the *Moral* many things for the new edition which you are to publish. When finished, I shall send this copy to Signor Moschini. I pray you to write to him, at your earliest convenience to forward to you, as soon as he receives it, and by the first conveyance, this volume which I have arranged. I say this because whenever Signor Moschini gets books from me to be forwarded to you, he accepts them somewhat reluctantly.

I have not much to insert in the *Moral;* for some points, which I thought were not inserted exactly as they should be, I found upon closer examination to be quite correct. One point only is to be added, and that I shall presently insert in the place to which it belongs.

There are, however, some matters to be changed in the first volume; not to be added, but changed. These changes will necessitate the omission of several pages and the abbreviation of some others. But of this enough. When you receive the work, you will find everything in its proper place. With these corrections, I think the work will be much better arranged than heretofore.

Meanwhile, accept my most sincere regards, and the expression of profound respect with which I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 312.

To the Same.

The same subject.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, June 6, 1777.

Most Illustrious Sir: Since you informed me of your intention to publish the eighth edition of my work, I began at once to arrange it for publication. I have, accordingly, added several small notes, and omitted a number of pages, particularly at the beginning, since I find these pages only injure the work and its sale. Nowadays no one cares for what is contained in them. I trust that, arranged in this manner, the work will have a still larger sale than hitherto.

Unless I err greatly, we have not yet received any information concerning the copies you wished to send to Signor Cervone, at Naples; but I hope they are on the way, and will arrive soon, by the time I shall have completed my task. Indeed, I am already nearly finished, for I have arranged, I may say, everything that required attention. Let me know whether you have written to Signor Moschini so that when the time comes, he may not receive with reluctance the commission of forwarding to you this newly arranged copy of my work. When your books arrive, I shall take a copy for myself, as you direct.

I have arranged all the additions in their respective places. They are short, one only being of any length. It is that which, as I wrote to you on a former occasion, belonged to the *Monitum*. This *Monitum*, by the way, is no longer at the end of the work; it is in the first book, and has been arranged in much better form.

Let me know whether, when sending this corrected copy, you wish me to tear off the pastebord and parchment, or to send it just as it is, cover and all.

With sentiments of profound respect, I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 313.

To the Same.

He asks for some books, and gives him news concerning the Congregation.

PAGANI, June 19, 1777.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your esteemed letter of the 7th instant, and I beg you to continue to direct to Brother Ilardo, at Naples, your letters intended for me.

With regard to the notes to be added, I am at present busily engaged upon this work and am very near the end. Not to lose sight of the subject-matter and be compelled to begin my researches anew in case of interruption, I have used a copy of my *Moral* that I had at hand. As soon as opportunity offers, I shall receive the other copy from Signor Cervone. Till then I shall retain the copy which I have arranged for the new edition. When I forward it to you, which will be as soon as you inform me as to the manner of sending it, I shall enclose a separate sheet containing the new arrangements, omissions, and additions, everything, in fine, that I have had occasion to change.

It matters not that there is no reason for publishing the new edition just now. I trust you will have an occasion to do so, however, before my death.

Rest assured that the work is now more satisfactory than it ever was. It is somewhat smaller on account of the pages left out, while on the other hand many pages have been added which will make it more desirable to purchasers, in view of the teaching now current. [*Two lines are missing.*]

I received from you two works of Father Noghera, one "Dogmatic Theology", the other on the "Supreme Power of the Pope". Both pleased me very much, and I thank you once more for your kindness. But besides these two

volumes, nothing else has come to hand. I also received three volumes of Father Patuzzi's work, but not the others, and I should like very much to have the remaining volumes if you will be so kind as to send them. When you do so, I would ask you to send also some copies of the dogmatic work, for here in Naples there are none to be found; all have been sold.

I am very thankful to you for writing to Signor Moschini. He will not make any difficulty now in accepting my *Moral*, which I shall send upon receiving word from you.

With sentiments of profound respect, I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

[*P. S.*] I desire to inform you that our Congregation has received some new foundations in the Romagna, particularly one in the city of Frosinone, and another recently at Benevento, in the kingdom of Naples. The Pope and Roman prelates are very kind to us.[1]

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

[1] We have already, in vol. iii. *General Correspondence*, Letter 881, spoken of this house which was given to the Congregation. It will be of interest to insert here the letter of the Sovereign Pontiff in reply to the expression of the saint's gratitude, and in which he speaks of his work in defence of the Holy See, mention of which was made in Letter 307, p. 127:

PIUS VI., POPE.

"Venerable Brother, health. Amid the momentous difficulties with which Our Pontificate abounds, it is a subject of consolation and pleasure to Us to have an opportunity of favoring those who by their labors, studies and zeal have deserved well of the Christian people. We were, therefore, much pleased to be able to confer upon you and your Congregation by virtue of Our Apostolic authority the house of the suppressed Society of Jesus situated in Benevento, with all its revenues and belongings forever. This We did, not

LETTER 314.

To the Same.

He informs him of his last work on the *Moral Theology*, in accordance with which, for reasons given, all future editions shall be published.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, June 26, 1777.

Most Illustrious Sir: This week I have received the copy of the *Moral*. As I wrote to you in my last letter, I have already prepared another revised and rearranged copy. This will certainly be the last of my life.[1] I should be

so much, indeed, upon the recommendation and instance of Our beloved son, Cardinal Francesco Banditi, whom We mention with all honor and respect, as from Our own spontaneous good will, freely and gladly. For We are not ignorant of the continuous examples of all religious virtues, and the remarkable proofs of learning, especially in the sacred sciences, which commend you and your companions, and make you worthy of some special token of Our munificence. Your letter conveying your most heartfelt thanks for this late favor, was particularly pleasing to Us, and We have received with every demonstration of affection your son, Reverend Father Fabricio Cimino, whom you sent hither to attend properly to this matter in concert with Our treasurer and the Treasurer of Our Apostolic Camera. The book which you have published even at this advanced age in defence of the dignity and authority of the Holy See, is a beautiful testimonial, indeed, of a spirit never wearied in the discharge of the duties of religion. We have received this work with joy, and shall read it when the multifarious occupations by which We are encompassed, leave Us the necessary leisure. For the rest, Venerable Brother, We lovingly impart to you and your Congregation the Apostolic Benediction.—Given at ROME, at St. Peter's, May 15, 1777, in the third year of Our Pontificate."

[1] It was in truth the last, for in the ninth edition, published two years before his death, the saint made no additions or alterations whatever. All the modifications made were for the eighth edition, which appeared in 1779. The saint speaks of these very frequently

ready to send it to you at once, had you only asked me to do so. However, let me entreat you to send for it as soon as you have an opportunity. I shall forward it without delay to Signor Moschini, to whom, as you informed me in your last letter, you have already written. Indeed, I shall send it to him during the current week. I shall send him, also, the separate folio containing a summary of all that I have expunged from the previous editions, as well as all that I have added or reformed.

in the remaining letters, and we have wished to call attention to them also, in order to make clear why the saint considered them so important at the time in which he wrote. The learned *à la mode*, as he himself was wont to style them, had rendered odious the very name of the Jesuits, now suppressed, and of Probabilism, as something intimately connected with them; so that it was all over with any work which presented even a shadow of either name. The saint thus placed, as we have frequently remarked, in the necessity of striking out from his works every pretext that might give occasion to such accusations, endeavored in this, his last work, to explain in still more unequivocal terms his doctrine of *Equiprobabilism*, and to omit all that he could of the works of Father Zaccaria, and Busenbaum in the treatise *de Conscientia*. Accordingly, 1. he retained only the third chapter of the second part of the *Prolegomena* of Father Zaccaria, namely, *de Romanorum Pontificum decretis;* 2. he omitted Busenbaum's entire treatise *de Conscientia;* 3. at page 304, at the end of the second volume, he added to the second list of retracted opinions three others, namely, numbers 15, 16, and 17; 4. he composed, as we have seen in Letter 263, p. 55, the *Morale Systema pro delectu opinionum, quas licite sectari possumus* (Moral System for the Choice of Opinions which we may Licitly Embrace), consisting of two parts, the *Monitum*, and the *Dissertatio de usu moderato opinionis probabilis* (Dissertation on the Moderate Use of the Probable Opinion), which had been inserted in the two preceding editions, though with some differences, as may be seen in the *Vindiciæ Alphonsianæ*, *P.* 1. *cap.* ii. § iv.

In this way, the saint thought and with perfect correctness, that he had completed his work, and omitted from it whatever might prove injurious to it in the eyes of those who at that time formed public opinion, if we may venture to use the expression, with regard to Moral Theology.

If Signor Moschini will accept the work, you will receive it in a short time; but should he refuse to accept it for the present, you will have to wait till he sees fit to do so.

I shall, nevertheless, send this new *Moral* to Brother Michele Ilardo, at Naples, this very day, that he may hand it over to Signor Moschini when that gentleman will be pleased to take it. That you have no intention of printing this work just now, matters little. I only ask you to send for it to Moschini as soon as possible, for you may then take care of it yourself until such time as you are going to publish another edition.

I am going to tell you something upon which until now you have not thought, perhaps, and it is this: hitherto the censors of books have placed no obstacle in the way of admitting the copies of the old *Moral;* but in the future it may easily happen that these old copies will not be received, for now the Society [of Jesus] is suppressed, and the books, particularly the Moral works of the Jesuits, utterly abhorred. In the future, then, it would not be surprising to see difficulties raised against the admission into Naples, and, perhaps, also into other parts of Europe, of my old *Moral* which contains at the beginning some treatises composed by Jesuits in favor of *Probabilism*, a thing nowadays in universal disrepute, and which cannot even be mentioned at Naples. I myself have been called to task by one of the ministers, Ferdinando de Leone, who had drawn up a *memorial* attacking me and my *Moral*, in which he said that one could easily see from my works that I was a *Probabilist*, and a follower of the System of the suppressed Society of Jesus. It will not do, therefore, for you to publish another edition of my *Moral*, unless it be according to the alterations made in the revised copy, from which all the treatises written by Jesuits in favor of *Probabilism* have been omitted.

I have wished to give you complete information with regard to this matter, so that you may act according to the dictates of prudence. I beseech you to answer me immediately on the receipt of this letter, as I shall be anxious to know whether you have received it or not.

With deepest respect, I remain,

Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

[*P. S.*] In Europe, the Pope is to-day a spectacle to the whole world.

[*Postscript of Brother Michele Iiardo,*] This morning I received the corrected copy of the *Moral*, and at once took it to Signor Moschini's. I made the agreement with him that if I should find an earlier opportunity of sending it *via* Manfredonia, I would return for it. In any case I shall send it to you at the earliest opportunity. Should you forward any books to Monsignor, you might send me that folio of the *Country Confessor* with them.

Your servant,

BROTHER ILARDO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 315.

To Father Lemetre, Superior of the Congregation of the Missions, at Naples.

He requests him to disabuse a Father of that Congregation of the false notion conceived of the doctrine upheld by himself and his companions on the subject of *Probabilism*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, July 15, 1777.

Most Reverend and Honored Father: I have been assured that the Superior of your Fathers at Bari is everywhere in that province accusing my companions, who are also called upon to give missions in the surrounding country, of being Probabilists and followers of the Laxist System.

My companions maintain the same doctrine as myself. Now I am not a Rigorist, much less am I a Probabilist. I maintain, as I have written in several of my works on Moral Theology, that the opinion in favor of liberty cannot be followed when it has no other support than the mere fact that it is probable. On the other hand, the opinion in favor of the law, I maintain, must necessarily be followed when it is *more probable*.

I say, therefore, that I am neither a Rigorist, nor a Probabilist, but a Probabiliorist,[1] and I assert that now when matters on this point which was hitherto so confused, are cleared up, this is the System which all should follow.

I beseech your Reverence to write to that Father at Bari what I say here, that he may change his ideas about our doctrine. I know full well that in Naples, also, many accuse us of this grave error; but I trust that they will come to a clearer understanding of the matter when they

[1] See letter of March 28, 1767, *Special Corresp.*, vol. i., p. 363, note.

read the numerous works I have published in order to remove this stigma from myself and my companions.

I confidently hope that your Reverence will do me this favor, for you know the high esteem in which my companions and I hold your most deserving Congregation.

I commend myself to your prayers, and subscribe myself with profound respect,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 316.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

He expresses his grief that an edition of the *Moral* had been published without his knowledge, and that, consequently, the edition with the desired improvements cannot be made.

NOCERA, November 27, 1777.

Most Illustrious Sir: To my great satisfaction, I have received your esteemed letter of the 15th instant, for it was a long time since I had any news from you. I perceive that you cannot now begin a new edition, as you have still on hand eight hundred copies of the last one.[1] My dear Don Giuseppe, what shall I say? The misfortune is that I did not know a word about that edition; otherwise I should have sent you even then the *Moral*, which, as you will see from the copy I forwarded to you recently, I have now so thoroughly corrected. I am certain that, according to the fashion of thinking now in vogue, this new *Moral* would be more acceptable and in greater demand than the old one, which contained many things that are looked upon by the learned of to-day with disgust and abhorrence. This is

[1] The seventh edition, publ shed in 1773.

particularly the case with the introductory treatises at the beginning of the volume, which contain many points on Probabilism. When people read such things at the beginning, they turn their backs upon what is said afterward.

Had I known that you were going to reprint the *Moral* as it was, I should certainly have warned you for your own sake, not to do so; because from the many notices that I receive of Moral Theologies published throughout Europe in accord with modern tendencies, I could have informed you that this work of mine would remain unsold, as, in fact, is already coming to pass. I repeat, the news of this edition causes me the liveliest grief, for I have your interests deeply at heart, and I am sorry that on my account you should sustain any loss.

I should be extremely glad, however, to learn that you had found a ready market for them all; but from the information I have received, as I just mentioned, I think that will be quite difficult. Still, do what seems best to you.

Should you hereafter change your opinion with regard to printing the corrected *Moral*, gratify me, I pray you, by letting me know it. I could already have taken many orders for the *Moral* in the form in which I sent it to you; but I shall now have to decline. I must tell purchasers to wait a while, if they will be satisfied to do so.

I am looking anxiously for the little works you were so kind as to forward me, and I shall take care to send for them to Signor Cervone, to whom, I suppose, you have consigned them. Besides these, I should like very much to have a few copies (four or five) of my dogmatic work on the *Council of Trent*, in regard to which a mistake has been made. Instead of sending it you sent me several copies of the *Truth of Faith*. These I returned to you, but I have not been able to receive the copies of the dogmatic work. If you could oblige me in this matter, I should be very grateful, although I do not cease to thank

you for all the inconvenience you undergo on my account.

With renewed expressions of profound respect, I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

[*P. S.*] I perceive that your letter is a reply to one of mine of some time ago. But on the same subject, namely, the new edition, I recently wrote you another letter, which you will have received by this. In view of this reply of yours, however, I will say that it is not necessary for you to inconvenience yourself further by writing to me on that subject.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 317.

To Signor Onofrio Paci, Printer at Naples.

The publication of the smaller works of St. Thomas would not be advisable.—The saint's zeal for the preservation of the faith.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, December 1, 1777.

My Dear Don Onofrio: I have received your letter, and I do not know what to answer. The undertaking is certainly a noble one, particularly as it concerns St. Thomas and his writings; but as I have no one here with whom to consult on the matter, I would prefer that you speak about it with some learned men at Naples, especially with the professors among the Dominicans, who can give you much information and assistance. I should, moreover, like to know whether these small works have been printed in the late editions of the writings of St. Thomas, and whether they are in demand among book-buyers. On these points you could get information from the principal booksellers.

What makes me timorous in advising this enterprise without assurance of its success, is that nowadays works of a doctrinal character are not much sought after by the corrupt world. They want books that treat of vanity, of poetry, or something against the truths of our holy faith, or the Church. I would, therefore, ask you to talk the matter over with many consultors, in particular, with priests and religious; and from what they say, after hearing the difficulties I find in the way, you may be able to draw some definite conclusion. For myself, without being able to speak upon the matter with other learned and experienced men at Naples, I should scruple to advise you to undertake the work in the present condition of things.

Should you, however, issue a prospectus to ascertain whether people would approve the plan, and whether they were anxious to have the undertaking begun, you would not, as I think, be bound to publish the works if no eagerness for them was manifested. But in these matters I have very little experience. I am speaking only according to my own judgment. See what others say upon the subject, and act according to their advice.

Certain it is, that the corruption of morals is daily on the increase, and faith is becoming weaker. God knows to what condition it will be reduced in Naples in twenty or thirty years. We must, therefore, pray earnestly and unceasingly to Almighty God to support our holy faith, and we must recommend the same to devout souls, and particularly to religious Communities. Miserable sinner though I be, I do nothing but pray Jesus Christ to help us, that our faith may be preserved, for if faith is lost, all is lost. To tell the truth, I should wish to see some scourge come upon us, that obstinate hearts might realize that there is a God, who, though long-suffering, does not always withhold the rod.

I speak thus, because I am dying with grief at the sight of the corruption that is everywhere gaining ground.

With sentiments of sincere regard, I remain,

Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

[*P. S.*] The truths of faith are denied, and sins multiply.

After the Roman edition and the original preserved in great part in the Convent of S. Monica of the Discalced Carmelites, at Ferrara.

LETTER 318.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

He thanks him for a present of various works, and speaks of the edition of the *Moral* which is so useful and eagerly desired.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, December 3, 1777.

Most Illustrious Sir: This evening I received your reply of October 4, containing information of all the books, large and small, that you are sending me. I am quite overwhelmed by this generous proof of your kindness, and I wish to know how I can repay you for it. I pray Jesus Christ, and I shall continue to beseech him to reward you both spiritually and temporally for all the acts of kindness you have already shown, and still show me.

I am now sure that you have received the last revision of the *Moral.* I trust that before my death you will have occasion to publish it, that I may be able to influence many to purchase it; for only this edition can I call a complete and perfect work, acceptable to the learned of to-day.

Once more, I thank you most sincerely. I have had inquiries made at Signor Elia's, and he tells me that he has

not yet received the books you sent me. I trust they will arrive. I shall continue to inquire of this gentleman regarding them. It will be a pleasure for me to read them, particularly the works of Noghera, which, I presume, are excellent, as, indeed, are all the books you have ever sent me.

With sentiments of profound respect, I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After an old copy.

LETTER 319.

To Signor Onofrio Paci, Printer at Naples.

He encourages him to publish the smaller works of St. Thomas, and points out how to do something for the faith, sending him for this purpose some very useful books.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, December 3, 1777.

Most Illustrious Sir: I am pleased to learn that only two of the smaller works of St. Thomas have been published; for since these works of the Angelic Doctor are most assuredly wished for by all, you can, I trust, safely undertake an edition of them. I learn with pleasure, also, that a friend of yours, a priest, will bear part of the expense with you. But with all this, do not forget to make inquiries among the people to ascertain how many will aid you in the enterprise. Take a note of their number, that you may be better able to direct affairs.

I thank you for the information you give me concerning our holy faith, also with regard to the doctor that is going about Naples selling his collection of corrupt books.

When you are in conversation with people in your

establishment, do not omit to speak to them of our holy faith, and to say: "Gentlemen, do not forget to commend our holy faith everywhere, for Naples is in a very bad state. A very learned man, who is likewise God-fearing, has said that twenty years will hardly elapse before the faith will be nearly, if not entirely rooted out in Naples."

I have still on hand some few copies of the small work, *The Truth of Faith*.[1] I send you five of them. See that they are given to those who need them, especially to priests, who can instruct others in the truths of our holy faith. I am satisfied to have them disposed of at eight grains, which, I may say, is the cost of the paper alone. This is a golden little book. If it were a comedy, it would have an immense sale.

With the assurance of my sincere regard, etc.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 320.

To the Same.

He sends him a small work, asking him to print it.

NOCERA, December 21, 1777.

I desire to have the accompanying little pamphlet, *Hints for Preachers*, printed as quickly as possible. I want to send it as a present, not only to all our own houses, but also to all the Congregations of missionaries, the Lazarists, the Pious Workers, the Dominicans, and others. I want it read not only by the Superiors, but like-

1 This small work was "Reflections upon the Truth of Divine Revelation, against the Principal Errors of the Deists", published in 1773; or rather the one published in 1762, entitled: "Evidence of Faith drawn from the Motives of Credibility". The saint calls it *small* to distinguish it from the larger work, entitled: "The Truth of Faith, against Materialists who Deny the Existence of God, Deists who Deny Revealed Religion, and Heretics who Deny that the Catholic Church is the Only True Church".

wise by the other Fathers, and the young men of these respective Congregations.[1]

I sincerely trust that this little work will prove very useful to souls, for it treats of things that everyone can do, and that are necessary for salvation. I beg Almighty God to bless it.

After an old copy,

LETTER 321.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

He inquires about a certain work sent some time previously to be printed, and speaks of its subject-matter and its importance.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, February 20, 1778.

Most Illustrious Sir: I should like to know whether you have yet printed my work, *Admirable Conduct of Divine Providence*, which I sent you some time ago, and which you informed me was already in press. I have had no news of late concerning it. It is a small book, but unless self-love deceives me, I think it is a golden work. Though small, it contains much beautiful instruction, not to speak of the immense labor it cost me. It contains the history of the Old and New Testaments, an explanation of the prophecies relating to the whole economy of the Incarnation, the coming and death of Jesus Christ, the conversion of the Gentiles, the dispersion of the Jews, and the destruction of their laws and government. It treats, likewise, of the fall of the four great empires of the world and a hundred other matters culled from the best authors, such as Natalis Alexander, Calmet, Huet, Bossuet, etc. To me it appears quite useful to combat all the works of infidel

[1] See Letter 908, page 262, vol. iii., *General Correspondence.*

writers of the present day, for it clearly shows that all the prophecies uttered in the Old Testament have been exactly fulfilled in the New.

I merely wish to know whether this work is printed or not. In case the copy I sent you has been lost, let me know, that I may forward the other copy. I say *the other copy*, because I have only one left.

I am anxiously looking forward to spring for the vessel that will bring the books you present me, as you informed me in your letter; but if the state of the weather does not change, I shall not have the pleasure of receiving them.

If the work, *Admirable Conduct, etc.* is printed, and you wish to send me some copies, let me ask you to send, also, a copy of the dogmatic work. Of this work, I have only one copy. Wishing, a few days ago, to look up a certain matter, I was obliged to search everywhere for it, but after all my trouble, I did not succeed in finding it.

Pardon the weariness I cause you by my letters. With sentiments of profound respect, I remain,

Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 322.

To the Same.

He recommends the printing of the work mentioned in the preceding.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, March 23, 1778.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your esteemed letter of the 14th instant, and again made inquiries of Signor

Elia, to ascertain whether he had yet received the bundle containing your books.

I learn that you have all the presses occupied with the "History" of Natalis Alexander and the author who is the continuator of the work. I must wait, therefore, as you write to me, until one of the presses is free, before the *Admirable Conduct*, which I call a golden little work, can be printed. I call this book *golden*, because, it seems to me, that it may be of great advantage to our holy faith in these times when the impious writings of wicked men who desire only to destroy the faith of Jesus Christ, are continually streaming from the press. It is not very large, but to my mind it is quite sufficient to stop the mouths of our modern unbelievers and the many loose young men who so loudly applaud the present literature against the faith.

I shall, then, expect to see this work printed as soon as one of the presses is free. I hope to receive some copies of the dogmatic work, as you inform me. Meanwhile, I again tender you the expression of my sincere regard.

When your presses are free, I hope you will undertake a new edition of the *Moral*, which I so ardently desire to see printed before my death.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 323.

To the Same.

After thanking him for a present of some books, he again recommends the printing of the *Moral* and the *Admirable Conduct.*

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, April 19, 1778.

Most Illustrious Sir: Your books have just arrived. The box is full! Three tomes in folio of Father Patuzzi, six copies of the *Victories of the Martyrs*, twenty of the dogmatic work, and six of the *Reflections!* I now understand how magnificent your present is. Words fail to express my thankfulness for your generosity.

After this, I fancy I shall not have the pleasure of receiving any letters from you for a long time. But I ask you not to forget the two works I have recommended you to print, the *Moral* and the *Admirable Conduct.* At least, I would request you not to fail to print the *Moral* when the presses are free. I should die content were this edition published. [*A line is missing.*]

I pray our dear Lord to reward you for all your kindness to me. I trust that after my death I shall be saved, and then I shall pray for you always.

With feelings of profound esteem and gratitude, I remain,

Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 324.

To the Same.

He acknowledges the receipt of a letter, and after repeating previous recommendations, informs him of his correspondence with Nonnotte, and inquires about the conversion of Voltaire.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, May 28, 1778.

Most Illustrious Sir: For some weeks I have been suffering very grievously from my infirmities, signs that my death is near at hand.

I have received your esteemed letter in which you tell me that you will send me, through Signor Elia, a copy of the *History of the Heresies* which I had printed, and twenty copies of the *Victories of the Martyrs*. You tell me, also, that as soon as the "History" of Natalis Alexander is finished, you intend to publish my *Moral*. I hope, as I have frequently besought you, that before my entrance into eternity, you will give me the consolation of seeing printed this *Moral*, newly revised and corrected according to my own mind.

Meanwhile, I thank you sincerely for the numerous presents you have made me. I am sorry that I cannot, in some way, repay all the favors you have hitherto bestowed upon me. I entreat our dear Lord to reward you for them in the present, as well as in the future life.

I wrote to the Abbé Nonnotte [1] to express to him my pleasure and satisfaction with his second beautiful work, "Dictionary against the Errors of Unbelievers", and he has written me a very nice letter in return. I have heard many rumors, now favorable, now adverse, of the conversion

[1] See *General Correspondence*, vol. iii., Letter 911, p. 268.

of Voltaire, an event ardently wished for by all Catholics.[1] A work treating of the affair at length, has been published at Naples; but the fact is questioned by very many of the learned, because there seem to be no signs of a true conversion. As you are well-informed on passing events, I would ask you to let me know what you think of this conversion.

I shall come to an understanding with Signor Elia about receiving the other books that you send me, and for which I again thank you most sincerely. Every morning at holy Mass I commend yourself and all your interests to Jesus Christ.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

[*P. S.*] With regard to the affair of Voltaire, the principal men of this place, who are in constant correspondence with Paris, assert as true, that Voltaire, shortly after his retirement last winter to his castle of Fernex, in Paris, was attacked by a severe illness, during which he sent for the celebrated parish priest of S. Sulpice to hear his confession. After this he recovered, and is now perfectly well; but of his conversion, not a word is said either by himself or others. This is all that is circulated as certain.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

[1] See *General Correspondence*, vol. iii., Letter 916, p. 278.

LETTER 325.

To the Same.

Various reports of the death of Voltaire

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, July 9, 1778.

Most Illustrious Sir: I have received your esteemed letter of the 20th of June. With regard to Voltaire, I have seen in the "Gazette of Florence" that, instead of taking his medicine at certain intervals during the twenty-four hours, he insisted on taking the whole at once. As it was opium, it caused his death. In another paper of the 2d of June, the account was that he wished to have his infamous "Dictionary" compiled by the members of the French Academy, each member taking a letter of the alphabet. They, however, refused to do so; whereupon he undertook it himself, beginning with the letter A. He worked forty-eight consecutive hours. To relieve the fatigue consequent upon such a strain, he took a cup of coffee every hour. This shattered his nervous system, and a severe stricture with retention of urine followed. The physicians tried to aid him; but overpowered by the attack, he succumbed during the night of the 30th of May.

It is stated, also, that the Archbishop of Paris [1] denied him the right of sepulture, and that they were thinking of removing him to his castle in France and burying him in the garden.

The latest advices from Florence, of the 6th of June, however, contain the following: "Voltaire died at Paris, on the 30th of May. Before his death, he was overcome by a profound lethargy brought on by taking a bottle of opium prepared for medicinal use, and sent him by his distinguished friend the Count de Richelieu. Voltaire, whether

[1] Mgr. Christophe de Beaumont.

from a misunderstanding or some other motive, it is not known, drank the entire quantity at once. Recovering from the deathly stupor, he thought he could help himself by coffee, thirty-two cups of which he took during the night, etc. He died a prey to fear and remorse. No church would grant him the right of sepulture, and he had no priest to assist him in his last moments."

To-day I have been informed that the twenty copies of the *Victories of the Martyrs* and a copy of the *History of the Heresies* have reached Signor Elia. I thank you again for this kindness, also for the hopes you hold out to me. I am still alive, but very much debilitated by reason of my numerous infirmities.

I shall not trouble you further. With sentiments of profound respect, I remain,

Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 326.

To the Paci Brothers, Printers at Naples.

Act empowering them to obtain permission to publish his works.

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, July 29, 1779.

As I am well pleased with the work done for me by Onofrio and Antonio Paci, Brothers, public printers of the city of Naples, both with regard to the extreme care and attention to the publication and republication of the works I have given to the press since February, 1772, I consented in another letter to their procuring permission to publish some of my ascetical works. At present, wishing to reward in greater measure their merit for services rendered

me, by these presents, I consent that these worthy gentlemen, the Paci Brothers, should obtain from his Majesty, through the proper tribunals, the exclusive permission to print all the works hitherto published by me, without any exception, and to the exclusion of everyone else. It is only just and right that these gentlemen, who have for years served me so faithfully, should reap some advantage in competition with foreign printers.

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After an old copy.

LETTER 327.

To Signor Giuseppe Remondini.

His gratitude and great satisfaction that the edition of the newly-revised *Moral* has been published.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE PAGANI, October 21, 1779.

Most Illustrious Sir: With indescribable pleasure, I have received from Don Giuseppe Antonio d'Elia of Naples, six copies of my new *Moral* recently published by you. As yet, however, no letter from you has arrived. I beseech you to send me a duplicate of the one you mention. I can only repeat that I shall die content, since this edition of the *Moral* is completed. I should not have been able to do so before this edition appeared.

In the first place, I thank God who has moved you to publish this new edition, and, secondly, I thank you most particularly. I beseech you to send me a copy of your letter as soon as possible, that I may be able to let you know how many more copies should be sent to Naples for those who desire to have the *Moral* in its new and revised form.

With sentiments of profound gratitude, respect, and most cordial affection, I remain,

Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 328.

To the Same.

He thanks him again, and asks for some copies of the *Moral* and their price.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, November 17, 1779.

My Dear Don Giuseppe, I can never sufficiently thank you for the beautiful edition you have published of my *Moral Theology*. I think I should have died unhappy, had death come before its appearance.

Yes, indeed, I want some more copies, four in particular, one for each of our other houses. Besides our Communities, other persons have already begun to ask for it, and as soon as it is known in Naples, I trust very many copies will be sold. When an opportunity of sending them offers, you may forward ten or twelve. Later, I shall inform you of others that may be needed.

If I could go to Naples, I might probably be able to dispose of quite a number in a few months; but as I am an old man, eighty-four years of age and a cripple, propped up in an invalid-chair, I must be resigned. But enough! Please let me know the price of the copies, and I shall inform you of the sale, and of the prospects of disposing of more. Meanwhile, I thank you once more, and presenting

my compliments, I pray you to ask of me anything that may be to your interest, if I am in any way able to serve you.

With sentiments of profound respect, I remain,

Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

[*P. S.*] Do not forget to inform me of the price of the *Moral.* If you think proper, send some copies to Signor d'Elia, as booksellers have better facilities to dispose of books than we who are always at home.

When sending copies of the work, let them be unbound, as they sell more readily than the bound.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 329.

To the Same.

He again asks the price of the *Moral.*

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, December 27, 1779.

Most Illustrious Sir: I am ever more and more obliged to you for the kindness manifested in your mindfulness of me. In return, I wish you every temporal and spiritual blessing.

You have done well in fixing the price of the new edition of the *Moral* at the same figure for which the others were sold; but as I am utterly unable to recall that price, be so kind as to inform me of it, that I may transmit it to you.

I shall have inquiries made at Don Michele Stasi's in Naples, concerning the receipt of the copies of the *Moral* in question, and the works of Noghera which you sent me as a present.

Placing myself at your disposal to execute your esteemed commands, I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 330.

To the Same.

He excuses himself for not being able to remit the money for the copies received.

PAGANI, March 11, 1780.

Most Illustrious Sir: I reply briefly to your esteemed letter. Above all, I thank you for the copies you sent me, also, for the information concerning the price.

At present, I have no money on hand, partly because I have not yet asked for my pension, partly because I have sustained the loss of certain revenues. As soon as I receive my pension, I shall send you the amount together with the request to send any more copies of the *Moral* that may possibly be needed.

With this information, and with sentiments of my most sincere regard, I remain,

Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original in the convent of the Capuchin Fathers of the Province of Ancona.

LETTER 331.

To the Same.

A request for more copies of the *Moral*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, January 8, 1781.

My Dear Don Giuseppe: I write to let you know that I am still among the living.

For some time I have been expecting those twelve copies of my large *Moral*, but have not yet had the happiness of receiving them. I earnestly entreat you to send them by the first opportunity on the opening of spring, through Signor Chiappori, by whom you mentioned you would forward them to me. At the same time do not forget to remind me of the price, that I may remit it to you without delay.

If I can be of service to you in any way, let me know.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop*.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

Special Correspondence.

II.

PASTORAL LETTERS.

(1744—1775.)

PART II.

Special Correspondence.

SECOND SERIES.—PASTORAL LETTERS.

LETTER 332.

To the Fathers of the Congregation.

On the manner of conducting Missions and Retreats.[1]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[CIORANI, 1744.]

In the first place, the Fathers shall bear in mind that they cannot go on the missions unless sent by Superiors. The latter, however, shall never send them out without the request of the bishops or of the parishes with the consent of the bishops; and they shall request that the permission and necessary faculties be given in writing. Subjects may, indeed, not only show themselves most willing to give missions, but likewise manifest an ardent though submissive desire to be so employed.

When they are about to depart they shall notify the bishop, or the archpriest, or the parish priest, of the time of their arrival at the city or town in which the mission is

1 This letter, we might almost call it a small Treatise on the Missions, was written by the saint as a part of the Constitutions of the Institute. But perhaps because it was too long, the end in view was obtained in another way, and it was not inserted. We publish it in this part of the *Correspondence*, because its contents are of a pastoral nature, and, moreover, because it has been published, though for the first time, among the *Letters* in the Roman edition.

to be given, in order that the latter may inform the people, in case it should be necessary in the larger places even by means of bills, and see that the house, beds, and kitchen utensils are in readiness. This notification shall also be given so that upon the arrival of the missionaries, the bells may be rung as on festivals, and the Fathers be met outside the gates of the town by the clergy with the processional cross, which shall then be given to the Superior of the mission, as will be remarked later on.

Before their departure they shall recite together in the church the *Itinerarium Clericorum*. Then having received the blessing of the Superior, who shall designate the one whom they shall obey in everything, they shall set out. They shall employ the time of the journey in exercises of devotion.

On arriving at their destination and meeting the clergy, as was said above, the Superior shall take the cross, and all shall go in procession to the church, reciting aloud the canticle *Benedictus*.

When they reach the church they shall at once pay a visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament, and then to the altar of the Blessed Virgin, to the patrons and titular saints, and fervently implore their assistance in the great work. They shall also pay particular homage to the guardian angels of the place, of the church, and of the individual faithful, begging their aid in the conversion of the souls committed to their care.

If the fatigue of the journey does not prevent it, should the day be a festival and the hour seasonable, they may begin the mission on the very day of their arrival, and preach the first sermon; particularly if the faithful have already assembled in considerable numbers in the church. Before the sermon, however, they shall say a third part of the rosary.

But as this seldom happens, only a short sermon shall be

preached to the assembled multitude. In it they shall be informed of the purpose of the missionaries in coming among them, and of their earnest desire to assist all, to procure the eternal salvation of all, by placing before their minds the eternal truths upon which they have not yet meditated, by instructing them in those things which are necessary for salvation, and by hearing their confessions with all patience and charity. The people shall then be dismissed without making the act of contrition, and told at what hour the mission will begin on the following day.

Let it be understood, however, that in opening the mission, they shall not be strictly obliged to adhere to any fixed rule; but that circumstances of place, persons, and the like, must be taken into consideration, and the opening conducted in the most suitable manner, either by a sermon in front of the church, to which is added a short act of contrition, or by first going around the town and then giving a sermon in the church, or by a set sermon either with or without the act of contrition.

Though the mission may not be begun on the same day, the Fathers shall by no means neglect to make the nightly exhortations which shall be continued three or four nights, according to the requirements of the place. The first exhortations shall be full of kindness and invitation, and display exceeding love for the souls of the people. The others may be of a graver character. All shall be short, not longer than a quarter of an hour. Nor shall they be made in the same place every evening or in the immediate neighborhood of disreputable places, but where they may be listened to by a large number.

When going to make the exhortations, the procession shall always start from the church. It shall be headed by the crucifix and lights, and announced by a little bell. During this procession, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary shall be sung. On arriving at the halting place, the little

bell shall be rung, and in a loud voice the preacher shall say: "Praised be the Most Holy Sacrament and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary!" Then, in the exhortation of the first evening, the people shall be reminded of the mission already begun or to begin on the following day, and then the exhortation proper shall be given.

After the exhortation the people, who generally follow the Father, are led to the church, or to the space in front of it, and there an act of contrition is made, and the crowd dismissed with the benediction of the crucifix. The women should be told not to join this returning procession, but to retire to their respective homes after the exhortation.

The missionaries shall make great account of these exhortations, as they are usually productive of immense fruit on the missions. They shall, therefore, never be omitted, nor delivered impromptu. Before setting out to make them, the Father should prepare for them by fervent prayer.

Should the day after the arrival of the missionaries be a festival, and the mission not have been already opened with the first sermon, confessions shall not be heard in the forenoon. A very forcible sermon shall be preached instead on "The Efficacy of the Holy Mission to procure the Eternal Salvation of the Christian", or on "The Miserable Condition to which Christianity is reduced", or on "The Danger in which they are who have committed Sin", etc. This sermon shall not be concluded with an act of contrition, but with an exhortation to make use of the grace which the Lord offers, an explanation of the various exercises to be held, and an invitation to attend everyone of them, particularly that of the afternoon, at the twenty-first hour.[1] The clergy shall be invited in an especial manner to participate

[1] According to the ancient measurement of time among the Italians. About three hours before sunset.

in the procession which shall take place from the church in the afternoon; and they shall be requested to appear in the long cassock and without surplice.

When all the priests have assembled in the church at the twenty-first hour, the procession shall start, the cross at the head, and shall make the circuit of the town or village, singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the necessary pauses, and shall halt in the *piazza* or in the district most thickly settled. Here a Father shall ascend a rostrum and preach a short sermon to the multitude, to induce them to a true change of heart upon the occasion of the mission; but it is not necessary to make the act of contrition. Having completed the circuit, the procession shall return to the church. During the procession, the Fathers who accompany it may go about the streets addressing words of exhortation to the people they find assembled in different places and inviting them to the sermon.

On arriving at the church, the third part of the rosary shall be recited together with the mysteries. This shall always be done before the great sermon. Then the Father appointed shall ascend the pulpit, without surplice or stole, and preach the sermon, which he shall conclude with a fervent act of contrition elicited from motives set forth in the sermon.

If the exercises of the mission have not been announced in the morning, the announcement shall be made after this first great sermon, and the people shall be exhorted to attend all the exercises with the greatest diligence, and for this purpose, the hour of the various exercises shall be mentioned. The ecclesiastics, the magistrates, and the principal men of the place shall be requested to be the first in attendance, to give good example to the rest. Moreover, where it is possible, two Fathers shall visit the lord, the chief official, or other distinguished person of the place, and in the name of all invite him to the mission, and solicit

his favor and assistance. Should the mission be in a city, they shall extend a similar invitation to the chapter when assembled in choir, either before or after Vespers, and in like manner ask them for their aid and favor.

All the exercises shall take place at the time specified, namely, the morning meditation at an early hour, Christian doctrine soon after dinner, the exercises for priests in a secluded place, and the great sermon an hour before twilight.

If, however, the people cannot assemble so early, as is generally the case in winter in those places in which there are laboring people, the evening sermon shall be postponed somewhat, provided the will of the bishop, or other reasonable ground is not opposed thereto.

I. On the morning following the sermon, as soon as there is a sufficient number assembled in the church, the rosary shall be recited, provided this exercise does not cause disturbance to the Masses or the hearing of confessions. Then a Father shall ascend the pulpit, and after greeting the auditory with the salutation: "Praised be the Most Holy Sacrament and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary!" he shall say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. He shall then recite the Christian acts, kneeling, and give a short and familiar meditation, the subject-matter of which shall be some point of the *via purgativa.* He shall, however, avoid those subjects which are to be treated in the evening sermon, at least he shall not consider them from the same point of view, and he shall conclude this exercise with the suitable acts of contrition, without appealing to the crucifix. This meditation with the accompanying acts shall not last longer than three quarters of an hour.

II. In the afternoon, the instruction in Christian doctrine shall be given, and this the Superior shall confide to the Father whom he judges most capable for the work. The

instruction shall be considered the most important and useful exercise of the mission.

III. At an hour most convenient for the people, the instruction on the Ten Commandments and the manner of making a good confession shall be given before the meditation. In case of scarcity of missionaries the meditation may be omitted, but this instruction never. When the instruction is given separately, suitable practical conclusions shall be made, and at the close the usual acts of contrition, etc., be recited. In small places, in which there is great spiritual destitution, it is better to give the instruction in the foregoing manner. After this instruction, the cleric shall bring the children together, and instruct them upon the manner of going to confession and holy Communion.

IV. Before the evening sermon, a Father shall recite the rosary of the Blessed Virgin, prefacing it with a short explanation or some example to inspire the people to say it with devotion. The mysteries shall be announced together with a brief reflection upon each, and care shall be taken that the entire third part of the rosary be always said. The principal reason for introducing this devotion, be it remembered, is to obtain the assistance of the Blessed Virgin for the success of the mission. When, however, the instruction takes place in the evening, it is advisable to say the rosary before it, because more are present at this time, and the interval between the instruction and the sermon may be filled up by singing a spiritual canticle. But these hymns shall never be intoned from the pulpit.

V. The evening, or great sermon shall take place at an hour most convenient for the people, as has been said, and the preacher shall wear neither surplice nor stole. Including the solemn acts of contrition, etc. made at the end before the crucifix and lighted candles, this sermon shall not last longer than an hour and a half. The Father shall bear in mind before the end of the sermon to urge the

people to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin, for which purpose, he shall see that there be near the pulpit a statue of our Lady.

With regard to ceremonies that sometimes accompany the missions, the following are forbidden: solemnly to curse anyone, to use chains or other instruments of penance unto blood, to burn one's self with a torch or the like. The use of the discipline and of the skull, when accompanied with fervor, prudence, and moderation, may be permitted by the Superior.

A decree of the General Chapter [1] (p. 97, viii.) enjoins that on all missions and other exercises, a sermon on the Blessed Virgin shall be preached, as this sermon has been found most productive of good results.

The Fathers shall, likewise, endeavor to mention in all the sermons love toward Jesus Christ and recourse to the Blessed Virgin; for on these two things, a solid love for Jesus Christ, and frequent recourse to Mary, his Most Blessed Mother, rests our salvation.

The exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, as will be stated later on, shall take place only on the day of the Benediction.

VI. Five or six times during the mission the discipline shall be taken by the men after the sermon; and on the last night they shall lick the pavement with the tongue. When the disciplines begin, the nightly exhortation shall be discontinued. Before the discipline, a Father shall make a short exhortation based upon the sermon just preached, and during the exercise, at some verse of the *Miserere*, he shall add a few words to inspire compunction. The discipline shall last only during the recitation of the *Miserere*. Then all shall say three *Hail Marys* with their faces on the ground, in honor of the Immaculate Conception, and the

[1] The First General Chapter, held in May 1743.

exercise shall conclude with the singing of a penitential hymn. On the last two or three evenings, after the discipline, the exhortations to reconciliation shall be added, and they who have come to be reconciled shall be made to embrace before the crucifix.

In cases of enmity, before summoning the second party, the Father shall privately examine the person presenting himself, in order to ascertain the cause of the enmity, and to see whether the person before him is the offended party and is willing to be reconciled, as also whether the enmity is only secret, or whether a reconciliation might not be accompanied with other inconveniences.

VII. On the last day of the mission, before the exercises of the "Devout Life", the sermon of the Benediction shall take place in the afternoon, and in the following manner: as on this day there is no instruction, the rôsary of the Blessed Virgin shall be commenced, and at the middle of the recitation, the Blessed Sacrament shall be carried in procession by a Father to the steps at the entrance of the church, and from there he shall bless the surrounding country: first, that which lies before him, then to the right, and, finally, to the left. The procession shall then return, and the Blessed Sacrament be exposed upon the altar. If the preacher has not yet arrived, the recitation of the rosary shall be continued. As soon as the preacher appears, wearing on this occasion surplice and stole, the Blessed Sacrament shall be veiled, and the sermon, which must be concluded with the Papal Benediction, shall be preached. The faithful are then to be reminded to say five *Our Fathers* and five *Hail Marys* to gain the indulgence of the mission just completed, and the preacher intones the *Te Deum*. The priest then says the prayer, *Deus, cujus misericordiæ, etc.* The *Pange lingua* and *Tantum ergo* are sung, and before the benediction the preacher shall

give another exhortation from the altar and require the people to promise to attend the exercises of the "Devout Life".

On the morning of this day, there shall be a general Communion for adults; that of the children of fifteen years and under shall take place on another day either before or after, as may seem best. Before Communion, he who preaches the sermon or another Father shall ascend the pulpit placed in the middle of the church, and as a preparation for holy Communion, recite the acts of faith, humility, love, and contrition with an appeal to the crucifix. Then the reconciliations shall take place, after which the Father shall recite the act of desire, and the people approach holy Communion. The exercise shall conclude with the thanksgiving.

At the Communion of the children, the ceremony of reconciliation shall be omitted, but they shall be made to sing hymns to the Blessed Sacrament both as preparation and thanksgiving. After the thanksgiving they shall be led in procession through the town or village, singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. On returning to the church they shall be given some advice suited to their age, and dismissed to their homes with the benediction of the crucifix.

VIII. The last three days, or in small places, at least the last two, shall be occupied with the exercises of the "Devout Life", which, according to a decree of the General Chapter, must never be omitted, and which the Fathers shall endeavor to establish in these places permanently. In the afternoon, after the recitation of the Chaplet of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin, or of the Infant Jesus, and, if there is time, of the usual rosary, a Father shall give from the pulpit an instruction of about half an hour on the manner of making mental prayer, the preparation and thankgiving for holy Communion, and the rule of life. He

shall then kneel down, without surplice, and give a meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, having taken care beforehand to have the statue of our Lady draped in mourning. This meditation shall be concluded with the acts of faith, hope, love, contrition, and the resolution to receive the holy sacraments at death. After the act of contrition, some devout hymn in honor of the Sacred Passion may be sung, and, finally, the people dismissed with the benediction with the crucifix.

Care should be taken to have the mission last at least ten or twelve days in small places. If there are any outlying hamlets, the Superior may, if he thinks proper, send some one thither to hear confessions and to preach.

The duties of the cleric shall be: to read the prayers; to remind the Fathers of the time for saying Mass in regular order, so that all may be finished by the hour appointed for going home; to notify the Fathers of the different exercises at the appointed times; to give the signal for returning home, but only after he has consulted the Superior; to provide whatever is necessary in the church; to conduct the instruction in Christian doctrine, the colloquies, the exhortations, and to say the rosary.

Rules to be Observed by the Fathers during the Missions.

I. They shall never go alone on missions. If the mission is to be given in a small place, at least two Fathers, or one Father with a laybrother, or in case of necessity, some secular priest, shall be sent. They shall always preserve toward one another the greatest charity (*qua major esse non potest*), bearing in mind that this is a special command given by our divine Lord himself to his apostles, and in them to all missionaries, who are their successors: *This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.—A new commandment I give you that you love one another. — Holy*

Father, keep them that they may be one as we also are one. They shall, likewise, call to mind the qualities of charity enumerated by the Apostle: *Charity is patient, kind, envieth not, acteth not perversely, is not puffed up, etc.*

When they have to go abroad either to extend invitations, or to perform any other service connected with the mission, they may, in case of dearth of companions of their own, accept the company of a priest or a cleric.

II. After the example of our divine Master and the apostles, they shall always travel on foot; unless necessity compels them to make use of some poor animal without vain trappings, and only in cases of extreme necessity shall they use horses. They shall never, at the instance and entreaty of any person whatsoever, admit any other mode of conveyance, except on sea. With regard to the question whether outside the time of missions they may ride in a coach or a carriage that is offered them, the Father [Mgr. Falcoia] answers, yes, so long as no change has been made in the habit.[1] The same holds good if any person of distinction should invite a Father to go with him in his coach.

III. As soon as they arrive at the place, they shall arrange the order of the exercises, and endeavor to follow it as closely as possible. There shall be allowed them seven hours sleep in winter, and six and a half in spring; but in summer they cannot give any missions. In spring, also, an hour shall be allowed for siesta during the day. During the missions they shall leave the church, as a rule, about

[1] In the beginning of the Congregation, the question of adopting for the members of the Institute a peculiar dress different from that of the secular clergy, was discussed. It is to this that allusion is here made. It was finally determined to retain the original dress, which still obtains, and which is, in fact, the garb worn at that time by the Neapolitan clergy.

mid-day, and the evening rest shall begin two hours before midnight.

The Superior shall take care to appoint a Prefect of the church, a Prefect of Peace, and an Econome.

IV. In the place in which they are giving the mission, the Fathers shall not go abroad alone, but shall be accompanied, at least, by a priest or cleric.

V. In the church they shall not change the confessionals assigned to them.

VI. They shall endeavor to avoid all familiarity and conversation on indifferent topics with the people of the place.

VII. At home they shall make mental prayer in common for half an hour twice a day; but when circumstances will not permit this, they shall make it at least once.

VIII. At table silence is to be observed. At dinner there shall be reading from the lives of the saints, and at supper, for some time at least, from a book treating of the Blessed Virgin. On days of general Communion, however, as also when the fatigue of the confessional, or other reasonable cause, requires, there shall be no reading; or rather in such cases, the reading shall last only a few minutes. A half-hour is enough for recreation after dinner as well as after supper.

IX. With regard to their requirements on the missions, the Fathers shall not seek to receive anything free of cost, except the house and beds, such as they are, and the kitchen utensils. However, should a Father receive a present of food or wine, or if the entire cost of sustaining the missionaries is undertaken by an individual, they shall gratefully accept it. But they shall take care to refuse all superfluities and choice viands, and, as a rule, content themselves with two courses, namely, soup and meat with, perhaps, some frugal side-dish, cheese or fruit, and nothing else. In declining all such presents, they shall allege the

Rule as their excuse. They will thus give edification, and at the same time avoid expense and the scandal that might be given to others. They shall, also, be careful never to accept money, not even for Masses, and they shall decline all delicacies, such as chicken, birds, sweetmeats, fine bread, pies, and the like; nor shall they take away with them anything whatsoever as a present.

The usual fare of the missionaries shall be soup and meat, cheese and fruit, for dinner; for supper, a salad with another dish, and cheese and fruit, when these can be had. If these are not obtainable, they shall accommodate themselves as best they can. In the matter of food, however, let them always be careful to avoid luxury, delicateness, and excess.

X. On missions and other public exercises of devotion for the people, the Fathers shall conduct the exercises for religious, also, if requested or ordered to do so by the bishop. In that case, they shall act as confessors extraordinary, a thing which otherwise is forbidden them except in favor of the nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer, when the latter earnestly desire it.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 333.

To the Same.

The manner of profitably conducting Retreats for ecclesiastics.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[About 1756.]

Our Father Rector Major would direct to the following points the attention of all the Fathers who, on missions, conduct the exercises for ecclesiastics.[1]

He desires that the sermon on the Blessed Virgin be preached with special reference to priests. On the other hand he does not wish that there should be preached to priests a set sermon on vocation, in which is proved, as some do, the extreme difficulty with which he that has been ordained without a vocation, will secure his eternal salvation. This sermon produces no good results, and leads to despair. It would be well, therefore, to preach it only to those who are preparing for ordination, not to such as are already priests. To priests it may be said in passing, that he who is ordained without a vocation, should lead a more perfect life, since he should have a greater fear of losing his soul.

He wishes, also, that a sermon on the Passion or on the love of Jesus Christ be preached, so that we may not be always talking of terrors and chastisements. When the sermons tending to inspire fear have been given, it is necessary to cheer up the heart: *I have run the way of Thy commandments when Thou didst enlarge my heart.*[2] It is, likewise, the wish of the Rector Major that the sermon

1 The saint here speaks in the third person, although he is himself the author of this instruction, as appears from the original written in his own hand.

2 "Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum."—*Ps.* cxviii. 32.

or, at least, the instruction on mental prayer, should be given.

Moreover, with the exception of the first sermon in which the introduction for all retreats shall be made, he desires that on the remaining seven days in place of an introduction, there should be given an instruction, or some practical advice for a quarter of an hour, as will be remarked later on. The rest of the time, three quarters of an hour, not more, or at least only so much as is required for the act of contrition, should be devoted to the sermon, and as a general rule, the act of contrition should always be made. What is said here, however, is not to be understood with regard to the retreats given at our own houses, where this instruction is a separate exercise. These instructions are, perhaps, more beneficial than the sermon.

Among the subjects treated in the instruction shall always be the manner of hearing confessions well; and should the preacher think fit, he may devote two instructions to this matter. He shall treat of the three-fold office of the confessor as father, as judge, and as physician. The Father Rector Major has composed a brief sketch of this instruction, copies of which have been sent to the communities. If anyone wishes to have one, let him write for it either to the Rector Major or to Father Pentimalli. However, everything will be found in the *Practice* already published.[1] In the first place, the office of the confessor as father is treated in chapter i. § 1, beginning with *n. 3*, the charity which he should show in receiving sinners, in encouraging them, and in disposing them as well as he can for absolution, which last point is treated in *n. 10*. In chapters iv. and v. is explained the duty of a confessor in his capacity of judge,

[1] "Practice of the Confessor for the Worthy Exercise of his Ministry."

in denying or deferring absolution in the case of those who live in the occasion of sin, or who relapsing into sin, do not present the extraordinary signs of contrition. The true extraordinary signs are also enumerated. In this part, too, the study necessary for a confessor is spoken of (see *Practice, n. 17*), and it is stated that those priests who have not the actual care of souls, are bound to fit themselves for the confessional, if the people of the surrounding country are in grave necessity, a point which I have proved in *n. 49, Di più*, and in my *Moral Theology, lib. vi. n. 625*. In § 2 of chapter i. *n. 6*, the office of the confessor as physician is treated, or the manner in which he should correct and admonish the penitent, impose penance, and prescribe remedies to secure amendment of life.

This instruction is probably the most useful of all the discourses, for it is of assistance in the direction of every class of penitents, so many of whom are lost either because they are inconsiderately absolved or wrongly sent away without absolution. If, therefore, two instructions can be given on this subject, it would, perhaps, be best to speak in one of the confessor's office as judge, and represent him in the other as father and physician.

It is the wish of the Rector Major that this instruction should never be omitted even when the exercises last only three days.

An instruction shall also be given on the celebration of holy Mass, the preparation, the manner of celebrating, and the thanksgiving after Mass. They may begin the instruction by saying that the holy Mass is the most beautiful work of God: *What is his beautiful thing if not the corn of the elect, and the wine springing forth virgins.*[1] Or they may say that it is the grandest of works with

1 "Quid pulchrum ejus, nisi frumentum electorum et vinum germinans virgines."—*Zach.* ix. 17.

regard to God, our neighbor, and ourselves. But God curses etc.: *Cursed be the man that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.*[1]

I. To prepare properly, mental prayer is necessary. Father Master Avila desired all to spend at least an hour in prayer.

II. With regard to the manner of celebrating, something should be said of the rubrics and the requisite gravity. Here mention shall be made of the time required for the celebration of holy Mass. On this point the *Practice*, *n. 49*, and the *Moral Theology*, *lib. vi. n. 400*, may be consulted.

It may be useful, also, to add here a reflection that is best made at the end, namely, that he who celebrates in less than a quarter of an hour (at least according to the more benign opinion), cannot be excused from mortal sin, first on account of the irreverence toward the Blessed Sacrament, and, secondly, on account of the great scandal given to the people. And first, with regard to the irreverence toward the Blessed Sacrament: in the *Moral Theology*, *lib. vi. n. 399*, it is proved that we are bound by the strict command of St. Pius V. to observe the rubrics of the Mass. This precept ordains that these rubrics be observed *districte*, *in virtute sanctæ obedientiæ* [most exactly, in virtue of holy obedience]. Now, it is impossible for a priest to say Mass in less than a quarter of an hour without failing notably in the prayers, or the rubrics, or the gravity becoming so august a sacrifice. Hence it follows that, although one may be fluent in the prayers, and quick in the rubrics, etc., one cannot be excused from grave irreverence, which, according to the teaching of the Council of Trent (*sess. xxii. in decr. de observ. in celebr. Missæ*), *ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest* [can hardly be sepa-

[1] "Maledictus homo, qui facit opus Dei fraudulenter." — *Jer.* xlviii. 10.

rated from impiety]. For the ceremonies were instituted by holy Church precisely for the end that so great a sacrament might be treated with becoming reverence and gravity.

Secondly, with regard to the scandal given to the faithful, the same Council of Trent declares (*sess. xxii. cap. 5, de Reform.*), that the ceremonies of the Mass have been instituted in order that from them the people might learn the dignity of this sacrifice and the sublimity of the mysteries therein contained. How, then, can he be excused from grave sin who performs these ceremonies in such a manner as not only not to inspire the faithful with veneration for the holy Mass, but to produce the contrary effect, namely, to weaken the respect and reverence which they already possess, or cause them to lose them altogether, yea, even to expose them to the temptation to disbelieve in the real presence of Jesus Christ, when they see him treated with such disrepect by his minister? The Council of Tours has, therefore, ordained that priests should be well-instructed in the ceremonies of the Mass, lest, instead of inspiring the faithful with veneration for the sacred mysteries, they quench their devotion.

III. As to the thanksgiving, see what is said in the *Visits*,[1] where mention is made of thanksgiving after Communion. The incident of Father Master Avila and the candles may, also, be cited.[2]

1 He alludes to the "Appendix on Holy Communion", added to the little work "Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament".

2 This incident is related by the saint in *Selva*, part ii. instruction i., as follows: "Those priests who after Mass, say a few short prayers in the sacristy, without attention or devotion, and then begin to speak on useless subjects, or even leave the church immediately after Mass and carry Jesus Christ into the streets, should be treated in the manner in which Father Master Avila once acted toward a priest who left the church immediately after celebrating Mass. He sent two clerics with lighted candles to accompany him.

Besides the instruction on confession and holy Mass, the following may also be given: 1. Mental prayer, unless a sermon is preached on this subject. See what is said in the *Practice*, p. 176. 2. The rule of life. This is a most important instruction, as it treats of the pious exercises which a priest should perform every day, every month, and every year. Every day, namely, in the morning, mental prayer for half an hour; the Little Hours of the divine Office (here mention should be made of the manner of reciting the divine Office); holy Mass, hearing confessions, or study (in connection with this point application to books, and the avoidance of idleness should be inculcated), and dinner (here it would be well to call attention to the necessity of moderation at meals, and of being satisfied with what is placed before us).

In the afternoon: the mid-day repose, spiritual reading, Vespers and Compline, a walk either alone or in company with some good companions, a visit to some sick person, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin for half an hour. In the evening: mental prayer for half an hour, if one has not made the half-hour's visit mentioned above, Matins, study, and the rosary; and after supper, the examination of conscience.

All these points treated in a practical way will be of far greater advantage than sermons couched in general terms.

A day of retreat every month to be spent entirely with one's spiritual interests, may be hinted at and recommended; also, the exercise of a retreat in some religious house every year.

3. An instruction may also be given on purity of intention.

When asked by the priest why they followed him, they replied: 'We are accompanying the Most Blessed Sacrament which you carry in your breast.'"

4. On the manner of reciting the divine Office, if it is desirable to make a separate instruction on this subject.

5. Detachment from relatives, from possessions, honors, self-esteem, and self-will; and for this end, to place one's self under the guidance of a spiritual director, and live in obedience.

6. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary: the three *Hail Marys* morning and evening, the rosary with one's household, fast on Saturday and the vigils of her feasts, and novenas; every day to read something treating of the Blessed Virgin; to preach in her honor on Saturdays and on her feasts.

7. Interior mortification, namely, of the passions, and particularly of the predominant passion. Exterior mortification, that is, of the eyes, of the tongue, and of the palate, etc., with special reference to mortifying one's self in the use of wine.

These short instructions shall be seven in number. With the exception of the two, confession and the holy Mass, which shall never be omitted, the Father who conducts the exercises, may select whichever he prefers. However, it seems that it would be well to give also the instruction on the rule of life.

These instructions shall be given at the beginning, immediately after the *Veni Creator*, *etc.*, then shall follow the preparation, and, finally, the meditation proper.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 334.

To the Clergy of the Diocese.

Recommendations and ordinances relating to the celebration of holy Mass, clerical attire, benefices, ordinations, and the simple and popular style of preaching.

[SANT' AGATA, July 30, 1762.]

Alfonso Maria de Liguori, by the grace of God, and the favor of the Holy See, Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti and Suessula, Baron of the fief of Bagnoli, and Rector Major of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Everyone knows the great reverence which the holy sacrifice of the Mass demands. We, therefore, earnestly recommend to our priests attention in celebrating this august sacrifice with all the ceremonies prescribed by the rubrics, and with the gravity befitting this sublime mystery, as well on account of the reverence due to God, as for the edification that may thence derive to the faithful. It was to secure this end that the Council of Trent imposed upon bishops the express obligation of preventing by every means all irreverence in the celebration of this sacred function; irreverence which can scarcely be distinguished from impiety, as the Council says in the following words: *Decernit sancta Synodus ut ordinarii locorum episcopi ea omnia prohibere atque e medio tollere sedulo curent ac teneantur, quæ vel avaritia . . . . . vel irreverentia, quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest, vel superstitio induxit.—Sess. xxii. decr. de observ. et evitand. in celebrat. Missæ.*

Now, as grave irreverence must be understood any notable omission of the ceremonies prescribed in the missal, which in so far as they pertain to the celebration of holy Mass, are of precept, also the saying of Mass in a hurried manner. The common opinion of theologians is, that he is

guilty of grievous sin who says Mass in less than a quarter of an hour; because to celebrate with becoming reverence not only must the prayers of the missal be pronounced distinctly, and the prescribed rubrics duly observed, but all this must be done with that gravity which is befitting,—a thing that cannot be done in less than a quarter of an hour, even in Masses of requiem or in the votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin.

All our priests shall, therefore, remember that in this matter our attention will be continual, and that we shall be careful to find out how the holy Mass is celebrated by them. And this as well in respect to the regular as to the secular clergy; for the Council of Trent has constituted the bishops its Delegates Apostolic in relation to the celebration of holy Mass, and ordains: "In accordance with the power vested in them by the holy Synod, and also as delegates of the Apostolic See, they shall forbid, order, correct and define such measures as their prudence may dictate, and that these exactments may be faithfully executed, they shall constrain the faithful by means of censures and other ecclesiastical punishments, all privileges, exemptions, right of appeal, and customs to the contrary notwithstanding."—*Decr. cit. in fine.*

We, accordingly, inform all priests subject to our jurisdiction, that, at the proper time they will be rigorously examined by us on the ceremonies of holy Mass. Meanwhile, we apprise them that it is our will that all priests should wear the long soutane at least in the forenoon, and those who are attached to service in choir should wear the long soutane also on feast-days, whenever they are present during the recitation of Vespers on those days. On ferial days, they may, if they choose, wear a decent civilian attire, and at Vespers in choir they may use the long soutane without sleeves. But clerics shall wear the long soutane both morning and afternoon.

Furthermore, during our administration let no one endeavor to procure favor for himself with us, either with regard to ordination, or the conferring of benefices, be these simple benefices or such as have the care of souls attached. Individual merit will be the only recommendation of use with us. And let anyone who would seek the use of influence, know that, by that very act, he renders himself unworthy of either ordination or benefice.

To the reverend archpriests and parish priests we would call to mind their obligation of preaching on Sundays and solemn feasts, according to the command of the Council of Trent. (*Sess. v. cap. 2, de Reform.*) This obligation requires of them, also, to preach in a simple and familiar style adapted to the character of their hearers, most of whom being country people, derive little or no profit from sermons delivered in a pompous style; on the contrary, they receive great injury, for unable to understand what is said, they conceive an abhorrence for sermons, and, consequently, seek to avoid them whenever it is possible.

Father Gasparo Sanzio used to say that preachers who make use of choice expressions and sublime ideas, are nowadays the greatest enemies of the Church; because by preaching in this manner, they are the cause of many souls being lost who would have been saved by simple and familiar preaching. On this account, also, Father Master Avila called all those who preach with such ostentation only to gain the applause of their auditory, not the ministers, but the betrayers of Jesus Christ. For, as St. Francis de Sales says, choice expressions, well-rounded periods, empty descriptions, and similar ornaments of vanity, are the pest of sermons, the only end of which should be to move the will of the audience to do good, and not to feed the intellect with foolishness. Indeed, experience shows that souls are not converted by sermons of exquisite style and

faultless delivery. And why? Because God dos not accompany such vanity with his grace.

What is here said shall be borne in mind by all those preachers who may be invited to preach in this diocese during Lent or Advent or at any other time. They who will not adopt a simple and apostolic style in their sermons, will not be received by us, or if received, such reception will not be very flattering to them.

We would, also, inform these preachers that, in the churches in which a course of Lenten sermons is preached, we desire that the preacher should always conduct the spiritual exercises of a retreat during Passion week. Should he fail in this we shall send another to do so to the no little discomfiture of the Lenten preacher.

With regard to those who are charged with the care of souls, we wish to remind them of the ordinance of the Council of Trent, namely, that they preach the word of God to their flocks according to their respective capacity: *Archipresbyteri quoque, plebani et quicumque . . . . curam animarum habentes . . . . per se vel alios, si legitime impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis et festis solemnibus, plebes sibi commissas pro sua et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis.—Sess. v. cap. 2, de Reform.*

We are persuaded that each and everyone of those subject to our jurisdiction will faithfully execute what we have ordained in this edict, and that no one will give us occasion, should the contrary occur, to proceed against him with that rigor which is prescribed by the dispositions of the sacred canons. In this firm confidence, and that these ordinances be observed, we enjoin upon the reverend archpriests and parish priests of the diocese, to make a copy of this edict, and place it in the sacristy of their respective churches, so that it may become known to all concerned, and serve as a personal notification. We further require them to inscribe

on the back of this original, which shall be returned to us, an exact account of the transcription and affixing of the copy mentioned above for the end proposed.

Given at SANT' AGATA DE' GOTI, from our episcopal palace, July 30, 1762.

ALFONSO MARIA, *Bishop of Sant' Agata.*
G. JERMIERI, *Canon, Chancellor.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 335.

To the Rural Deans of the Diocese.

Ordinances abolishing the abuse of the chase among the clergy, to promote instruction in Christian doctrine among the people, and to regulate the conduct of the seminarists during the vacation, and their admission into the seminary.

Episcopal Palace, SANT' AGATA DE' GOTI, August 30, 1762.

Very Reverend and Dear Brethren: Our pastoral solicitude is entirely directed toward the maintenance of exact observance of discipline among the ecclesiastics of this city and diocese, subject to our jurisdiction. To promote this end we have deemed it necessary to make the following regulations, which we hereby transmit to you that you may make them known to the ecclesiastics of your respective cities and villages, for their prompt and complete observance.

I. We have learned from reliable sources that several of our ecclesiastics, and even of the clerics, have taken the liberty to join in the chase without our written permission, and without any distinction with regard to the season. Some even, and this is especially painful to us, have attended the most boisterous hunting parties in secular attire, against the express prohibition of the sacred canons. To put an end to so grave a disorder, and to meet it with

prompt and suitable remedies, we ordain that no ecclesiastic of this diocese, whatever be his rank or dignity, shall from the receipt of this notification henceforward presume to take part in the chase without the written permission of ourselves or our Curia, which permission will be given *gratis* and with the conditions and limitations prescribed by the canons. The violation of this ordinance will subject the culprit to an imprisonment of three months.

As to the clerics who aspire to the priesthood, we absolutely forbid them to join in the chase. Still more so do we forbid it to the seminarists, under the same penalty, and, moreover, under pain of exclusion from Holy Orders. At the same time we inform them that we shall never grant them this permission under any condition. They may, therefore, spare themselves the trouble of applying for it.

II. We recommend the reverend archpriests, parish priests, assistants, and chaplains of parochial churches, to read to the people of their respective charges, at the first and also at the second Mass on all feast days, the little abridgment of *Christian Doctrine* which we send to each one of them by the bearer of this notification, and which they shall follow exactly. The parish priests and their assistants, also the chaplains of the parish church, of chapels, or of churches separated from the parochial church, may mount this abridgment upon a tablet or cardboard, so as to have it at hand. They shall see that it is kept in a particular place, where they may easily find it; and they shall read it aloud to the people with the necessary pauses, in order that all may be able to understand it.

III. We ordain, also, that the members of our seminary and all who desire to enter the same, shall, at the beginning of the coming month of September, present their application for admission, as only those will be accepted who have received letters from us. They shall, likewise, be prepared for an examination in the branches they have studied.

For this examination, we appoint the 15th, 16th, and 17th of the coming month. On these days the candidates for admission shall appear before us at our episcopal residence, and be examined as to their abilities; and they only will be received who aspire to the priesthood, and possess the requisite talents and good moral character.

We, moreover, inform these seminarists that, during the entire time of vacation, they should deport themselves with becoming gravity, and give edification by their good behavior. They should also be present in the church and render assistance at the sacred functions. Of all these matters, let them remember, we shall endeavor to procure an exact account, which will serve us as a guide in proceeding against any of them with the severity that may be necessary.

Finally, all the seminarists shall bear in mind that they will be admitted to the seminary under certain conditions. Upon their entrance they shall be required to assume the black cloak, and wear it during the entire time of their stay in the seminary. Should they fail to do so, they shall be excluded without mercy. With this black cloak, be it well understood, they shall also wear the customary soutane of violet color.

These are the prescriptions which we transmit to you, Very Reverend Brethren, in order that what these ordinances contain may be carried into effect without delay. For this purpose, we desire each one of you to take a copy of them, and duly certify his compliance on this original, which shall be returned to us.

Praying God to shower upon you every blessing. . .

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 336.

To Don Giulio Danco, Rural Dean of Durazzano.

The saint orders him to communicate a certain notice to the regular clergy, so as to secure the devout celebration of holy Mass.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

SANT' AGATA, September 7, 1762.

His Lordship bids me say that he has learned that there are in the diocese some members of the regular clergy who celebrate holy Mass in less than a quarter of an hour, and this too, perhaps, after the General Edict in which it was shown that such an act cannot be excused from mortal sin, according to the common teaching of theologians. His Lordship, therefore, wishes you to inform all the monasteries of your district that he will send around to all these places persons to see how they celebrate holy Mass; and that should it be remarked that any religious celebrates in too hurried a manner, his Lordship will, if the delinquent does not amend upon being admonished, take such measures as are most effectual to remedy this disorder; since in what pertains to the holy Mass, the bishops are constituted Delegates Apostolic over all priests whether secular or regular, as Benedict XIV. declares in his Bull. This is expressly stated by the Council of Trent (*sess. xxii., decr. de observ. et evitand. in celebrat. Missæ*), where it is said: *Locorum Ordinarii, pro data sibi a sacrosancta Synodo potestate, ac etiam ut delegati Sedis Apostolicæ, prohibeant, mandent, corrigant, statuant, atque ad ea inviolate servanda, censuris ecclesiasticis, aliisque pœnis, quæ illorum arbitrio constituantur, fidelem populum compellant, non obstantibus privilegiis quibuscumque.*

His Lordship expressly requires you to report to him

whether you have served his notification to all the regular clergy, and he sends you his blessing.

Your very humble and obedient servant,

GIUSEPPE JERMIERI, *Chancellor.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 337.

To Don Francesco di Filippo, Archpriest of Frasso.

He informs him of a general order which is shortly to be published against gaming among the clergy, and insists upon the observance of the ordinance regarding the instruction at the Masses.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

SANT' AGATA, September 14, 1762.

With regard to priests joining in games in public places, some steps must certainly be taken. But as we intend to publish a general order upon this very subject, which will be binding on all, we desire to weigh the matter well before doing so. In the meantime, your Reverence will endeavor to remedy the evil as best you can.

As to the Christian doctrine you will make it known that it is our wish to have the instruction given twice on all Sundays and feasts, not only in the parish churches, but also in collegiate and all churches where there is a number of priests, that is, at the first Mass, and at another at which there is a concourse of the faithful. All the rural chapels, those within as well as those outside the walls are embraced in this ordinance. Indeed, the need is all the greater in those outside the walls. We, therefore, send you six copies of the *Christian Doctrine.*

Blessing your Reverence, we remain, etc.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 338.

To the Rural Deans of the Diocese.

He orders the hour for the late Mass on feasts to be observed.—Two necessary requisites in parochial certificates of matrimony.

SANT' AGATA, November 7, 1762.

Very Reverend and Dear Brethren: We learn with extreme sorrow that in our cathedral and in the principal churches of the diocese, the hour of the late Mass which is to be celebrated for the convenience of the people, namely, mid-day, is not observed as it should be. On the contrary, it is usually anticipated, so that the greater part of the faithful, particularly in country places, are deprived of hearing holy Mass. As we cannot tolerate this abuse which entails such loss to so many souls confided to our care, we have determined to charge, and we do charge by these presents, all those whose duty it is to say this late Mass, scrupulously to observe the hour appointed. The priest shall go out to say Mass just before mid-day, and be at the altar when the sign is given to the people by the bell that it is mid-day, and not before. The penalty for disobedience to this order shall be two pounds of wax to be burned during the visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament in the church of the transgressor, and other punishments at our good pleasure.

In those churches in which no regulation with regard to him who is to be appointed to say this Mass exists, it shall be celebrated by each one in turn, or the reverend archpriests or those who hold precedence in the church shall devise some other way, according as it seems most expedient, in such wise, however, that this Mass shall never, for any reason or excuse, be omitted at the hour designated.

In case of disobedience the same penalties as above shall be inflicted.

We learn, also, that two very necessary items are omitted in the certificates of parties desiring to enter into matrimony: namely, the reverend archpriests and parish priests do not give the baptismal certificates of the persons contracting, from which should be shown that they have attained the age required by the sacred canons to enter upon this contract; nor do they state that the parties are instructed in the rudiments of the faith. We, accordingly, ordain that in the certificate which they are obliged to draw up, the reverend archpriests and parish priests shall testify that the contracting parties are, according to the data of the baptismal register, of legal age, and also instructed in the rudiments of the faith,—a fact to be ascertained by previous examination. The penalty for contravention to be determined by our good pleasure.

We send these ordinances to you, Very Reverend and Dear Brethren, in order that you may make them known to all whom they may concern, for the faithful observance of the matters therein set forth, and that such publication be to each and everyone as a personal promulgation. Having fulfilled this duty, you will return to us this original with your report.

Imploring the blessing of heaven upon you all, we remain, etc.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 339.

To the Parish Priests of the Diocese.

On the manner of making mental prayer with the children during holy Mass.

[SANT' AGATA, 1762.]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

Before Mass, the following preparation shall be made, and the point of meditation read; then Mass shall begin. Even though the priest be vested, he shall wait in the sacristy or at the altar until the reading is finished, in order that what is read may be heard without difficulty, and be not confounded with the sound of the prayers at Mass.

I. Let us adore God here present: "O my God! I believe that Thou art here present, and I adore Thee with my whole heart."

II. Let us humble ourselves before him: "O God of infinite majesty, in the abyss of my nothingness I prostrate myself before Thee, and acknowledge that I am not worthy to appear in Thy sight. How many years ago, O my God! have I deserved to be in hell on account of my sins against Thee! My God, pardon me. I am sorry for them with all my heart."

III. Let us ask light of Almighty God: "My God, for the love of Jesus and Mary, grant me light in this meditation." Then say a *Hail Mary* in honor of the Sacred Heart of Mary, and a *Glory be to the Father* in honor of the wounded heart of St. Teresa.

1. The point of meditation is then read, but the reading shall not be longer than a page of an octavo volume or two pages of a book of smaller size. The book, as also the acts indicated on the accompanying card, should be read by one of the larger boys, who shall read clearly and distinctly.

The subjects of these meditations shall be, for the most part, the eternal truths and sin. On Fridays, however, the Passion of Jesus Christ, and on Saturdays, the Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, shall form the topics of the meditation.

The children shall be taught to keep their eyes cast down, or to cover them with their hands, so as to pay attention to what has been read. The second point of the meditation shall be read after the *Sanctus*.

2. As soon as the reading of the first point is finished, the Mass shall begin. At the Offertory the reader shall say: "Let us make an act of love:—O my God, how good Thou art! I wish to love Thee as much as all the saints love Thee; as much as Thy dear Mother Mary loves Thee. But if I cannot love Thee so much, my God, my all, my only good, because Thou art worthy of all our love, I love Thee above all things, I love Thee with my whole heart, with my whole soul, with all my mind, with all my strength. I love Thee more than myself, and could I do so, I would make Thee known and loved by all men even at the price of my blood."

During the meditation, one or the other priest who is present may go around suggesting some brief reflections on what has been read.

3. After the *Sanctus*, the second point shall be read. It shall be on the same subject as the first, and read in the same manner.

4. After the elevation of the chalice, the reader shall say: "Let us make an act of love to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and also an act of contrition: My Jesus, who for love of me art present in this Sacrament, I thank Thee for so great love, and I love Thee with my whole heart. Eternal Father, for the love of Mary, for the love of Thy dear Son Jesus dead upon the cross, and present in this Sacrament for love of us, pardon me all my sins, and

all the displeasure I have caused Thee. I am heartily sorry for them, O my God, because I love Thee with my whole heart."

5. After the *Pater noster*, the reader shall say: "Let us renew our resolution of never more offending Jesus Christ —My Jesus, with the help of Thy grace, I desire to die rather than offend Thee again.—As the fruit of this meditation, let us make some particular resolution that will give pleasure to Jesus Christ, especially to rid ourselves of the fault we most frequently commit." After a brief pause: "Let us ask Almighty God for the love of Jesus Christ to give us the grace to fulfil the promise we have made."

6. When the celebrant has said *Domine non sum dignus* or after the Communion of the people, if there are any communicants, the reader shall say: "Let us have recourse to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and ask her for some special grace: O Mary, my hope, I love thee with my whole heart. I would wish to die for thy love. My dearest Mother, take me under thy mantle, and there let me live and die. For the love of Jesus Christ, my dear Lady, obtain for me the grace which I now ask of thee." Here each one shall ask of Mary with the utmost confidence the grace desired.

After Mass, all shall recite the *Hail, holy Queen*, with the proper pauses, and add the prayer "Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord".

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 340.

To the Archpriests, Parish Priests, and Confessors of the Diocese.

Instructions and ordinances regarding the administration of the sacrament of penance, the observance of the Paschal precept, and the absolution of certain classes of sin.

Episcopal Palace, SANT' AGATA, February 20, 1763.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

One of the most grievous afflictions that beset us in our diocese is the very great ignorance in matters of faith which prevails so extensively among the poorer classes; and we can hardly persuade ourselves that this ignorance is not in part due to the negligence of those having the care of souls to provide that all their people are sufficiently instructed in the rudiments of the Christian doctrine. According to theologians, pastors are bound to go after those who do not come to church, and instruct them.

I. It is, therefore, our express wish that during the entire season of Lent all the archpriests and parish priests should devote themselves to the instruction of the children of their respective charges. At all events, we desire them to spend the two weeks preceding Palm Sunday in teaching the catechism to the children, so that on the Monday or Tuesday of Holy Week they may admit to holy Communion all who are prepared. They shall try to hear the confessions of the children in Passion week; and with regard to the Communion, they shall bear in mind that it is the common teaching of theologians that the obligation to receive the holy Eucharist begins for the children when the ninth or tenth year is reached, and may not be deferred beyond the twelfth, or at most, as in the case of children of feeble mental endowment, beyond the fourteenth year. St. Charles Borromeo enjoined upon his priests to prepare

all the children for holy Communion as soon as they had attained their tenth year.

II. And as this ignorance in matters of faith obtains not only in the little ones, but in adults also, we direct the pastors to inform their parishioners that no one will be admitted to the sacrament of penance during the Paschal season, who does not present a certificate testifying that he has been examined in Christian doctrine, and approved by his parish priest or some one commissioned by him. We command the archpriests and parish priests to be careful to conduct in person, or through other good priests appointed by them for the purpose, the examination of all those who are in need of instruction. They shall commence these instructions at the beginning of Lent, so that there may be sufficient time to prepare all according to their respective needs.

III. Furthermore, with regard to the precept of receiving the holy Eucharist at Easter, we charge all the pastors to appear before us without delay after the feast of the Blessed Trinity, and to denounce without human respect those who have failed to comply with their Easter duty, in order that we may be able to apply the proper remedies.

IV. The reverend pastors shall inform their people that everyone who does not receive the sacraments at his own parish church during the Easter time, will be regarded as a transgressor of the Paschal precept, as has been declared by Clement VIII. in his explanation of the Council of Lateran given by Cardinal Lambertini *Notif. 18, n. 12.* And we shall not admit as satisfactory of this precept the Communion received in our cathedral by those who do not belong to Sant' Agata; as it is our wish that all who fulfil the Paschal precept be known to their respective pastors. We caution the pastors, however, to display the necessary firmness in refusing holy Communion to public sinners who have not as yet given evident proof of amendment.

V. To avoid the inconveniences that may arise and the frauds that may be resorted to with regard to the fulfilment of the Paschal precept, and also to introduce the new order which shall henceforth be observed every year in this matter, we enjoin upon every archpriest and pastor to take the census of his people during Lent before the Paschal season begins, and distribute the tickets for Communion to all who are bound by the precept. When the faithful, then, come to their respective parish churches to fulfil their Easter duty, each one, before receiving holy Communion, shall hand to the pastor the ticket received from him, on the back of which shall be written the name of the communicant. At the end of the Paschal season, the pastor shall ascertain from these tickets who has complied with his Easter duty, and he shall note down in his book the names of those who have fulfilled the Paschal precept and those who have not.

Should any of his parishioners, who has fulfilled the Paschal precept, wish to preserve the Communion-ticket for some laudable reason, the pastor shall return it to him, but only after the expiration of the Paschal season, and he shall be careful to write his own name upon it.

VI. The pastors are recommended to have one or more strange confessors to hear the confessions of the faithful once a month on some feast, beginning with Easter Sunday next. On those days the pastors shall refrain from going to the confessionals themselves.

They are, likewise, recommended to have a general Communion for the children three times in the year, namely, at Christmas, Easter, and about the Assumption or the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.

They are admonished not to receive the troth of parties promising marriage, unless they are certain that the marriage in question will follow in a short time.

Furthermore, they are exhorted in their sermons to

inveigh frequently against those fathers and mothers who permit young men to visit their houses under pretense of wishing to marry their daughters, and to call to mind the reserved case to which excommunication is attached, under which such parents fall. The pastors shall, therefore, rebuke them with severity, and should no change take place, inform us, that we may proceed to declare them excommunicated. Frequently, too, they shall inculcate in their sermons recourse to our divine Saviour and his Blessed Mother for assistance in time of temptation. They shall, also, exhort their hearers to have a tender devotion toward the Mother of God, and a childlike confidence in her. For this end we desire that every week, either on Saturday or Sunday, every pastor should preach a short sermon upon devotion to the Blessed Virgin, or have it done by another.

Finally, we enjoin on all confessors, under pain of suspension, not to admit to the sacrament of penance during the Paschal season anyone of whom there can be a probable doubt that he is ignorant of the rudiments of faith, if he does not present the certificate of his pastor showing that the bearer was examined and approved by him or by another deputed by him for that purpose.

The confessors shall, likewise, be on their guard not to absolve those who are living in the proximate and voluntary occasion of sin, unless this occasion is first removed; those who relapse into sin and do not manifest clear and extraordinary signs of amendment; fathers and mothers who neglect to teach their children the necessary truths of faith; parents or other heads of families who allow betrothed persons to remain together alone in danger of committing sin. This last case we have reserved; and let it be remarked that by betrothed are understood all who directly or through a third person, have plighted their troth, even though the betrothment has not yet taken place in presence

of the pastor, or the conditions agreed upon before the notary.

We command every pastor to take a copy of this letter, and to certify on the back of the original that he has received it and done so.

To all we impart our pastoral blessing.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 341.

To the Archpriests and Parish Priests of the Diocese.

Suspension incurred *ipso facto* by those who say Mass too hurriedly.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

SANT' AGATA, November 28, 1763.

The Council of Trent has imposed upon bishops the grave obligation of preventing the irreverent celebration of holy Mass by priests, whether secular or religious. In this matter, the ordinaries have been constituted by the Council Delegates Apostolic with power to inflict censures and other ecclesiastical punishments at their discretion upon all priests, even those who enjoy the privilege of exemption in other matters, who say Mass irreverently. The words of the Council are: *Decernit sancta Synodus ut ordinarii locorum episcopi ea omnia prohibere atque e medio tollere sedulo curent ac teneantur, quæ vel avaritia . . . vel irreverentia, quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest, vel superstitio . . . induxit.* At the end of the decree the Council says: *Hæc igitur omnia . . . Ordinariis proponuntur ut ipsi . . ., pro data sibi a sancta Synodo potestate ac etiam ut delegati Sedis apostolicæ, prohibeant, mandent, . . . atque ad ea inviolate servanda censuris ecclesiasticis aliisque pœnis, quæ illorum arbitrio constituentur, fidelem populum compellant; non obstantibus privilegiis, exemptionibus . . .*

ac consuetudinibus quibuscumque. Now, according to the common teaching of theologians, a priest who says Mass (even those of requiem or the votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin), in less than a quarter of an hour, cannot be excused from grievous sin; because it is impossible to celebrate holy Mass in so short a time without grave irreverence. In order, therefore, to fulfil our obligation, and to put an end to a serious disorder (for we have been informed that in a certain part of our diocese Mass is said very hurriedly), we hereby declare *ipso facto* suspended from celebrating holy Mass any priest, secular or religious, who shall say Mass in less than a quarter of an hour.

And that this regulation may come to the knowledge of all, and that none may plead ignorance thereof, we desire you to take a copy of it which you shall put up in the sacristies of your respective churches.

Praying heaven to bless you with its choicest gifts, we impart to you our pastoral benediction.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 342.

To the Parish Priests and Confessors.

Communication of a faculty in favor of the dying.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

[SANT' AGATA, December, 1763.]

Very Reverend and Illustrious Sir: His Holiness Clement XIII. now gloriously reigning, has been pleased to grant to us the faculty of imparting the Papal Benediction, to which a plenary indulgence for the hour of death is attached, to all those of our city and diocese who, in their last agony, are truly contrite and receive the sacraments, or, when their condition will not permit this, invoke devoutly either with their lips or in their hearts, the Ho-

ly Name of Jesus, and accept death from the hand of God with resignation, as the debt due to sin.[1] His Holiness has, also, conceded to us the power of delegating this faculty to such persons as we think fit. In order, therefore, that the souls that are about to pass from this life may not be deprived of so great a treasure, we hereby communicate this faculty to all archpriests, parish priests, assistants, and confessors approved by us, whether secular or religious, of this city and diocese. This communication is made without any restriction as to the number of cases; but the form published by Benedict XIV. of happy memory in the Brief of April, 1747, must be observed in all its details. We enclose the Rescript of His Holiness communicating this faculty to us with power, as stated above, to delegate it in turn to others, that each of you may copy the formula at the end of the document; for this formula must necessarily be used in every case in which this Benediction and plenary indulgence are to be given.

You will do this, we hope, and return to us the original letter sent us from Rome, and state at the end that you have executed our commands.

Beseeching heaven to favor you with every blessing, we impart to you our pastoral benediction.

After the Roman edition.

[1] This faculty was granted December 3, 1763.

LETTER 343.

To the Same.

On the approach of the Paschal season he renews the ordinances of the previous year with regard to the administration of the sacraments of Penance and holy Eucharist.

SANT' AGATA, February 28, 1764.

As the Paschal season draws near, our desire that all the archpriests and parish priests should instruct the children, is again revived. This work they should perform for at least two weeks before Palm Sunday, in order that, according to the admonition of St. Charles Borromeo, they may admit to First Communion the children of about ten years of age who are prepared.

With regard to the adults, we again charge pastors to warn their parishioners that, during the Paschal season, they will not be admitted to the sacrament of Penance unless they present a certificate showing that they have been examined in Christian doctrine by their respective pastors, or by some other priest appointed by him, and have been approved. The priests shall conduct this examination publicly in the church, and not in their own houses, —a thing which we forbid under penalties at our good pleasure.

Pastors shall, also, instruct their people that they are required to receive the sacraments in their own parish church, and that we shall not admit as satisfactory of this precept the Communion received in our cathedral except in the case of citizens of Sant' Agata.

Pastors are, furthermore, admonished to appear before us without delay after Trinity Sunday to denounce without human respect those who have neglected their Easter duty.

We hereby renew the ordinance of last year, namely, that during Lent every pastor shall take the census of his

parish, and at the same time distribute the Communion tickets. When the faithful come to fulfil the Paschal precept, they shall, before receiving holy Communion, hand to the pastor the ticket received from him, on the back of which shall be written the name of the communicant. In this way the pastor will know who has complied with the Paschal precept. Should any of the faithful wish to preserve the Communion-ticket showing that they have fulfilled their obligation, the pastor shall return it after the expiration of the Paschal season, taking care to sign his own name upon it.

To afford perfect freedom of conscience, pastors are exhorted to procure a strange confessor for their people once a month, and to abstain from hearing confessions themselves on those days.

Besides the general Communion of all the children at Easter, there shall also be one at Christmas and about the Assumption of our Lady.

Pastors in their sermons shall frequently inculcate upon fathers and mothers not to allow young men to visit their houses under pretence of wishing to marry their daughters, and they shall remind them that this is a reserved case to which excommunication is attached. Pastors are admonished, also, not to officiate at the betrothment of young persons, unless they have assured themselves that the marriage is to take place in a short time.

We renew, also, the ordinance forbidding all confessors, under pain of suspension, to admit to the sacrament of Penance during the Paschal season those about whose knowledge of the truths of faith there may be a prudent doubt, unless such persons present a certificate of approbation from their pastor or some one appointed by him.

Confessors shall, also, bear in mind that they are not to absolve heads of families who allow engaged persons to remain together alone, in evident danger of sin. It is to

be remarked that in this reserved case are included those who have plighted their troth through a third person, as well as those who have done so personally; even though the betrothment has not taken place in the presence of the pastor.

At the end of this letter, every pastor shall acknowledge the receipt of the present ordinances, and state whether he has made a copy of them.

We impart to you all our pastoral benediction.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 344.

To the Archpriests and Parish Priests of the Diocese.

Prohibition to say holy Mass without the proper vestments. —Conditions under which strange priests may be allowed to say Mass.

SANI' AGATA, June 8, 1764.

Very Reverend and Illustrious Sirs: With no little grief we have learned that, in various parts of the diocese, certain ecclesiastics do not observe an ordinance published by us, requiring the use of the long soutane with sleeves during the celebration of holy Mass. These ecclesiastics have taken the liberty to use civilian attire. Wherefore, renewing our previous ordinance, we hereby ordain that, from the publication of this notice, all the priests of the diocese shall, when approaching to celebrate holy Mass, wear the long soutane with sleeves, under pain of suspension to be incurred *ipso facto*. And we entirely forbid the use of civilian attire at Mass, except in the case of a priest of the diocese who finds himself in any part thereof, and who, by reason of his business, is wearing only this garb.

Furthermore, we charge you not to allow any strange priests to say Mass in your respective churches or in the

churches of the places in which you reside, unless they present dimissorial letters from their ordinaries, or are, at least, persons of known probity.

That what we have herein ordained may come to the knowledge of all, and that no one may plead ignorance as an excuse, we desire that a copy of this letter be placed in the sacristies of the respective churches. The original shall be returned to us with the information that this injunction has been carried out.

We impart to you all our pastoral benediction.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 345.

To the Clergy of Frasso.

Various ordinances upon points of ecclesiastical discipline necessitated by the Canonical Visitation.

FRASSO, during the Canonical Visitation, July 22, 1764.

Alfonso Maria de Liguori, by the grace of God and the favor of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti and Suessula, Baron of Bagnoli, and Rector Major of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

During the course of our pastoral Visitation in this territory of Frasso, of our diocese, we have learned of many abuses and irregularities which prevail among the members of the collegiate and other clergy. To provide a speedy remedy for those evils, and to restore everything once more to proper order, we have determined to make the following regulations, which we desire to have promptly and faithfully observed. These regulations shall be enforced under penalties according to our good pleasure, penalties which will infallibly be meted out to him who disobeys, and in addition to the punishments already mentioned in the different paragraphs here given.

I. *The Celebration of Holy Mass.*

In the first place, we learn with deep sorrow, that there is not in the collegiate church of this place the proper distribution of the Masses on Sundays and feasts of obligation, as also on days of devotion when there is usually a great concourse of people. All the Masses, we are informed, are said, so to speak, at once, and in the early hours of the morning. In consequence, the people have no opportunity of hearing Mass in the later hours, and particularly during summer when not only the choral service, but every other ecclesiastical function, also, is over at eight o'clock.

We, therefore, ordain that, on all those days, Sundays and festivals, the Masses shall be celebrated two at a time and not more, and for this purpose the chief sacristan shall see that on those days only two chalices and two sets of vestments are prepared for the Masses. Moreover, the members of the collegiate body shall go to the choir on those days one hour later than usual, so that all the people who wish may be able to go to confession; for experience teaches that the confessors, as well as the rest, leave the church after the Office is finished, even though they are wanted in the confessionals.

II. *The Conferences.*

We have been assured that the conferences on cases of Moral Theology and rubrics have almost entirely fallen into disuse because of the small number of ecclesiastics that attend them, and also on account of the little order observed in them. With regard to this matter, it is our desire that, on Wednesday of each week, the ecclesiastics assemble at the sound of a bell in the usual place, the sacristy of the archpriest, and there discuss any question that shall be proposed. This question shall be in accordance with the rules given at the end of the directory, and

shall be posted by the secretary of the conference on the preceding Wednesday. It shall be treated by the priests upon whom the lot falls, and decided by the prefect of the conference. When it appears to him that the question has been sufficiently discussed and a decision reached, the prefect shall close the conference. It shall also be his duty faithfully to note down those who are absent, unless they are legitimately prevented from attending, and to transmit to us every month a detailed list of the absentees.

III. *The Distribution of Revenues Received for the High Masses, etc.*

It has come to our knowledge that the division of the daily allowance takes place in the choir of the collegiate church, with great confusion and altercation, whereby not only the divine Office is disturbed, but scandal, likewise, is given to the faithful. We, therefore, ordain that from the publication of these regulations, whenever any moneys are to be distributed, the procurator shall see that it is done without any disturbance or wrangling; and he that would provoke contention shall be subjected to the loss of his share of said distribution in favor of the other members present.

IV. *The Choir.*

We enjoin that, in the recitation of the divine Office in choir, the requisite pauses be observed, for in the past it has been recited precipitately. The prefect of the choir of the collegiate church shall see that this is scrupulously executed; and in case he be absent for some just reason, his place shall be taken by the one who is first in rank, and so on successively. The prefect shall, furthermore, be watchful that the choral discipline be exactly observed, especially in regard to silence. Of this latter point, we desire the most strict observance, and no member of the

chapter shall dare to read letters in the choir, or to speak to another during the divine Office or other ecclesiastical function, except it be of some matter pertaining to the Office or the sacred function that is going on. Those who violate this rule shall be fined two *tornese* for Matins and for Lauds, and one *tornesa* for each of the Little Hours that is recited. To the same fine of one *tornesa* shall be subjected every one who refuses to sing the high Mass for which he is appointed. We require those whose office it is to record these penalties, to be most vigilant and to impose the respective fines herein described, without any regard to persons, for we lay this matter upon their conscience. Furthermore, we wish all the members of the collegiate chapter to show prompt obedience to him who presides during the Office, and anyone who may be obliged to leave the choir for a just reason, shall first ask his permission,—a point in which there has been much neglect shown hitherto.

V. *The Mass for Benefactors, Solemn High Masses, Processions, and Vespers.*

With very great displeasure, we learn of another intolerable abuse in the collegiate church, namely, that the conventual Mass for benefactors is not sung every day. We, therefore, ordain that from this day forth, this obligation be punctually fulfilled according to the requirements of the sacred canons and the Bull of Pope Benedict XIV., of happy memory. And we reserve to ourselves all provisions to be made with regard to the arrearage of those Masses which have not yet been said. Moreover, on all feasts of our Lord, the holy apostles, and evangelists, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the patron and titular saints, and on other solemn feasts of the year, there shall be sung a solemn high Mass with deacon and subdeacon taken from among the members of the chapter in turn, and at this Mass all shall assist according to custom. Should any of the Canons

not be able to assist, he shall see beforehand that another takes his place, or else he shall suffer the loss of his share of the daily distribution for five days, as also his share for the day itself, which shall be given to the one below him in rank who shall be obliged to perform the duty imposed upon him without resistance. The Canons shall also render this assistance in turn whenever there is to be a procession of the Most Blessed Sacrament, or other processions which they must attend, as on the first and third Sundays of the month and other days. Finally, it is our wish that on all the feasts mentioned above, the first Vespers be solemnly sung on the evening before, and on the morning of the feast, at least Lauds, under the penalties to be inflicted at our good pleasure.

VI. *Masses on the Vigils of Feasts, and the Ferial Masses during Lent and Advent.*

We desire, also, that during the holy seasons of Lent and Advent, and on all vigils throughout the year, two Masses be sung according to the prescriptions of the rubrics, whenever the feast of a saint of double or semi-double rite falls upon those days. On those days, however, only the conventual Mass shall be applied for benefactors; the other in satisfaction of an obligation of the chapter. The infraction of this regulation will be visited with punishment at our good pleasure.

VII. *The Meetings in the Sacristies.*

In order to avoid the altercation and disputes which, as we learn to our extreme sorrow, are wont to take place whenever the Canons convene for the transaction of business pertaining to the chapter, we command that the statutes treating of these meetings be minutely observed. The prefect shall propose the matter to be discussed, and then each one, beginning with the senior Canon, shall give his

opinion in a moderate tone of voice and without the least shadow of contention. No one shall speak out of his turn. After the discussion the votes shall be taken, and the matter decided according to the majority of votes cast. This manner of procedure shall be adhered to under penalty of one month's incarceration for the delinquent, who shall be denounced to us by the chapter.

VIII. *The Use of the Breviary in Choir.*

We are informed, to our sorrow, that the greater part of the Canons do not use the breviary in choir during the recitation of the divine Office, but content themselves with the diurnal. We, therefore, ordain that during Matins everyone shall use the breviary or, at least, that part which corresponds to the season of the year, so that while the lessons are read in choir they may follow them with becoming attention. The observance of this regulation is enjoined under penalties at our discretion.

IX. *Funeral Services.*

When the Canons are required to attend funeral services, many of them repair to the place in a very disorderly manner, waiting for one another on the streets or in the stores. Equally disedifying is their conduct on the occasion of processions, to the no small scandal of the people. In future, therefore, they shall observe the proper order, and go two by two from the time they leave the church till they return. They shall, also, observe the external decorum that becomes their station. Penalties for infraction at our good pleasure.

X. *The Clerics.*

We have been told that the clerics and novices of this district seldom frequent the sacraments, and are absent from the divine service and the care of the catechism class in the

archpriest's church on Sundays and holydays of obligation. We learn, also, that so far none of them have rendered any assistance in the collegiate church, and that, when requested, they have refused to take part in the sacred functions or even to serve Mass.

We, therefore, ordain that all clerics and novices approach the sacraments at least every two weeks, and on the feasts of the holy apostles and of the Blessed Virgin; also that they be present to conduct the catechism class on Sundays and feasts of obligation. Furthermore, some of them to be designated in writing by us through our chancellor, shall be appointed to the service of the collegiate church, and the rest to the service of the archpriest's church, and this arrangement shall never be interfered with. In consideration of their large number, one-third shall be appointed for the collegiate church, and the remaining two-thirds for the church of the archpriest.

That these clerics may correctly discharge their respective duties, we desire the Reverend Canon Don Francesco Brancone to watch over them with particular vigilance, and to reprimand them in case of negligence. Should any of them prove incorrigible, the Canon shall simply inform us thereof. On their part, the clerics shall be blindly obedient to him in regard to what he may prescribe, under pain of being excluded from Sacred Orders, and other penalties at our good pleasure.

XI. *The Chanters of the Choir.*

For all the sacred functions of which singing forms a part, the prefect of the choir shall appoint two chanters to give the intonations so as to avoid all confusion. In the absence of the prefect this appointment shall devolve upon him who acts as prefect in the choir.

XII. *The Treasury and Archives.*

As there is in the collegiate church no treasury in which may be placed for safe keeping all moneys received, until some new enterprise is undertaken, or the money invested, we decree that, within two months, a deposit safe shall be constructed, furnished with three keys, one of which shall be kept by the prefect, another by the first deputy of the chapter, and the third by the procurator during his term of office.

We require, also, that, within six months, the archives of this church be put in order, for at present the documents are in so confused a state that it is impossible to find anything. The task of arranging the archives, we entrust to Canon Don Michele Gisondi, the present archivist, and Don Vincenzo Maria Carulli, who, within the time specified, shall arrange in alphabetical order in as many volumes as may be necessary, all the documents, and make a detailed index at the beginning of each volume. These archives shall be guarded under two keys, one of which shall remain with the archivist of the chapter, the other with one of the senior Canons appointed by the chapter.

XIII. *Changes and Substitutions.*

To remove from the chapter an abuse which has crept in, namely, that a Canon may substitute another in his stead for the service in choir during the week in which he is obliged to be present, even though he himself does not reside here or does not do so permanently, a liberty which the Canons take as often as they please, in violation of the express regulation of the sacred canons which permit them to get another in their stead only rarely, and only in case they themselves reside in the place:—to remove this abuse, we ordain that Canons who desire to avail themselves of this privilege accorded them by the Church,

shall, in securing another as substitute in the choir, be reasonable, and not do so oftener than four times in the month, and provided they are themselves residents of this city or its suburbs. Under no other conditions, will this be allowed, and every infraction of this ordinance will be punished with the forfeiture of the delinquent's share of the distribution of that day, which shall be turned over to the other members of the chapter.

XIV. *Recorders.*

That the recorders may discharge their duties properly, we desire that, after their election, they shall take an oath in presence of the prefect, faithfully to fulfil their offices.

XV. *The Prefect.*

In order that the discipline of the choir be faithfully observed, and all that we have herein commanded be punctually carried out and produce the desired results, it is our wish that the archpriest or the prefect of the choir be present at the recitation of the divine Office during the week that falls to his lot, unless he be at this time engaged in exercises of the ministry that require his personal attention. We have been informed that these officials are rarely, if ever, present.

XVI. *Games.*

You all know that in a circular letter published by us, we forbade the ecclesiastics subject to our jurisdiction, under penalties therein expressed, to play cards in public places, such as, apothecaries, coffee-houses, stores, and similar places; and we permitted only such games as are not forbidden by the sacred canons, when played for the sake of diversion, and in the houses of respectable persons.

As we have learned, however, that some ecclesiastics have abused this permission, and have dared to play games

in pharmacies and like places of this district, we hereby confirm what we have already decreed upon this subject as stated above, and we enjoin upon all ecclesiastics the exact observance thereof, and that in future no one shall dare take part in any game in the public places mentioned, under pain of fifteen days' imprisonment for each offence. Furthermore, we forbid all games, even in the houses of respectable persons, to the clerics, subdeacons, and deacons, under pain of one month in prison and deprivation of Orders.

XVII. *The Crucifix.*

We have been apprised that on some of the altars in the churches here, the crucifixes are small. This is contrary to the prescription of the rubrics and the Bull of Pope Benedict XIV. of happy memory, which forbid small crucifixes on the altar at which Mass is said. Accordingly, we command these crucifixes to be removed from the altars on which they are, and within one month, larger ones to be provided which shall be in proportion to the candelabra, and so placed as to be higher than them and visible to the faithful during the celebration of holy Mass, as the Bull above-quoted prescribes. Violations of this regulation will be punished at our good pleasure.

XVIII. *Duties of the Canons on all Holydays of Obligation.*

To our sincere sorrow we have, also, learned that the Canons of the collegiate chapter are not all present at the divine Office and other ecclesiastical functions on all holydays of obligation during the year; but that alternating, only those are in attendance on certain feasts, who are obliged to be present during that week. Likewise, that during Lent the Penitential and Gradual Psalms, and the Office of the Dead, are not recited after the Office of the day, as is required by the rubrics on certain days.

We, therefore, ordain that on all holydays of obligation during the year, without exception, also on the feast of All-Souls, every member of the collegiate chapter shall be present at the recitation of Office in the choir, and at the other ecclesiastical functions, under pain of forfeiting the entire allowance that would fall to his share on that day,—a penalty which shall be exacted without the least human respect, and be applied in favor of the other members. We, furthermore, command that on the days prescribed during Lent, the Penitential and Gradual Psalms and the Office of the Dead be recited with the Office of the day, under penalty at our good pleasure, which shall certainly be inflicted in every case of delinquency.

Finally, we ordain that on the second Sunday of every month the Rules of the chapter be publicly read by the secretary before Vespers, that each one may know what is contained in them with regard to the maintenance of exact observance. For this reading, all the Canons shall assemble in the sacristy of the collegiate church. At the same time and place, we desire that these our regulations be read by the secretary, so that they, as well as the Rule, may be observed with dutiful punctuality. Both these documents shall be preserved in the archives. As executors of these regulations as well as of all the other decrees of the pastoral Visitation of this district, we constitute the Very Reverend Archpriest, Don Francesco di Filippo and Canon Vincenzo Carulli, and enjoin on them to see that everything is most strictly observed. Should any delinquencies occur, they shall admonish the culprit for the first offence, and in case no amendment follows, they shall refer the matter to us for the administration of suitable remedies.

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 346.

To the Clergy of the Diocese.

Prohibition of certain games.

Episcopal Palace, SANT' AGATA DE' GOTI, November 2, 1764.

Alfonso Maria de Liguori, by the grace of God, Bishop, etc.

As there is nothing which so effectually hinders the reformation of manners and the correction of abuses that have been introduced among the people, as the bad example of the clergy, "whose manner of living," says the Council of Sardis, "being exposed to the eyes of all, becomes the model of either good or wicked lives", we take very much to heart the gravity of the obligation incumbent upon us of removing from our clergy and keeping at a distance from them, as far as lies in our power, whatever might be an occasion of scandal or bad example to the faithful. We are, likewise, solicitous that we should not have to render an account to Almighty God for the offences of ecclesiastics connived at or uncorrected by us. Considering, therefore, the innumerable evils and sins that arise from certain classes of games, which have been prohibited with good reason by the sacred canons, we desire to apply a prompt and efficacious remedy to these abuses. Accordingly, we forbid all the ecclesiastics of this our city and diocese, under pain of suspension *a divinis*, reserved to ourselves, and to be incurred *ipso facto*, and other punishment at our discretion, to play at any game of chance whatever, be it with cards or dice, and in particular, basset, primero, *Quanto inviti*, *paraspinto*, or by whatever names such games may be called. At the same time, we warn all that we shall be most diligent in pursuing those who disobey this ordinance, and unrelenting in punishing them with necessary severity.

We desire, therefore, that the present regulation be made public and put up in the usual places, so that no one may be able to excuse himself on the plea of ignorance.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 347.

To the Canons Confessors of Sant' Agata.

He reminds them of their duty of being in the confessional especially on festivals.

[SANT' AGATA, November, 1764.]

We have learned with extreme sorrow that the faithful of Sant' Agata complain bitterly that you, Reverend Sirs, are seldom in the confessionals even on Sundays.

We would remind you that a large part of the revenues of the chapter is, as you already know, derived from the income of the parish churches; and, therefore, as you also know, each one of you has the obligation *in solidum* of a pastor of souls, so that when one is absent, another is bound to take his place. None of you can allege: "Why am I bound to go to the confessional and not the others?" In reality, this obligation is individual, and is, likewise, a matter of justice, since each one is supported by the contributions of the people of Sant' Agata. The two parish priests cannot meet all the wants of the people, and, consequently, the Canons are bound to come to their assistance. But now, when it is time to be in the confessional, the Canons repair to the choir to recite the Office, although we have dispensed from choir service the confessors who are occupied in hearing confessions on feasts.

With still greater concern, have we learned that even those who were formerly most assiduous in the confessional, are also becoming negligent in this respect.

This letter we should have written to you long ago, but we refrained from doing so until now, when we are on the

eve of Advent and all the solemn festivals that come in its train. Not only are you, Reverend Sirs, bound to attend to the wants of the faithful of Sant' Agata, an obligation binding upon you in justice; but you are, likewise, bound in charity to attend to all the faithful of the diocese. This is especially the case since we have taken from nearly all the priests, parish priests alone excepted, the faculties to absolve in reserved cases, and granted them to the confessors of Sant' Agata, in order that when such people come to confession there might be some one that could absolve them.

We beseech you, therefore, by the bowels of the mercy of Jesus Christ, and for the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to be present in your confessionals on festivals; and we feel confident that our wishes will be complied with, and that no cause for further displeasure will be given us.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 348.

To the Canons of the Cathedral, Chaplains, and Canons of the Diocese.

Notification I.[1]

[End of 1764.]

I. We would remind you all of what Benedict XIV. has said in his Brief of January 19, 1748, to Cardinal Delfino,

[1] The six notifications which we here insert are addressed to the different classes of ecclesiastics in the diocese, with a view to promote more and more the spirit of ecclesiastical discipline, the dignity of the sacred functions, in a word, the sanctification of souls, which was ever the first thought of the holy bishop. In order that the reader may understand their importance, and behold in them a new proof of the ardent zeal of the saint, it should be stated that, as soon as the holy bishop learned the condition in which the diocese stood, he at once set about to convene a diocesan synod. The Sovereign Pontiff on being informed of his design, blessed his pious

Patriarch of Aquileia, namely, that to participate in the daily distribution, ecclesiastics appointed to the service of the choir must not merely be present during the Office, but must also sing or recite the psalms of the divine Office. Should they fail to do so they shall lose their share of the daily allowance, as also the emolument arising from their prebendary, and the distributions and emoluments thus forfeited, cannot be granted to the delinquent by the others in whose favor they are forfeited before the latter have actually received them.

II. We recommend to all the members of chapters to pronounce the words of the divine Office distinctly, and to pause at the asterisk which precisely for this purpose has been introduced into the psalms by the Church. We, likewise, recommend silence in the choir, and we charge those whose duty it is, to fine promptly and without human respect, anyone who shall carry on a conversation in the choir. We would also remark that no one shall leave the choir except to hear confessions or to say Mass; and when going to celebrate, several shall not leave the choir together, but only a few at a time.

III. All elections and other matters of importance in our cathedral, as well as in the collegiate churches, shall be decided by secret ballot only. By matters of importance are

intention, and granted a plenary indulgence to all the faithful who should approach the sacraments on the day of the opening of the synod (Brief of June 21, 1764, *Cum, sicut accepimus*). Nevertheless, after mature reflection the saint was obliged to abandon the execution of this idea, foreseeing the obstacles which the civil power would prepare by its interference in ecclesiastical affairs. It was to obtain the results he thus anxiously desired that he published these notifications. "I will effect through these notifications," he writes to Father Tannoia, who records the fact in the "Life of St. Alphonsus", "what I should have wished to bring about in the synod. In this way, I shall not be troubled by every crack-brain who might take it into his head to annoy me, and prevent me from obtaining from Naples the royal consent to hold the synod."

understood all lawsuits which the chapters may be obliged to undertake or defend, and all questions pertaining to the personal affairs of their members, even though they be of no considerable moment; furthermore, all matters which the archdeacon or another, who is presiding officer of the chapter, shall deem important, or concerning which any of the Canons requests a secret ballot.

IV. In our cathedral, the Canons shall be present at the Office and Mass that are sung on All-Souls' day, also on the two following days when the Office and Mass are said for the deceased bishop and members of the chapter. Absentees shall be subjected to the forfeiture of their daily allowance.

V. We remind the members of all chapters of the precept of the Council of Trent (*sess. xxiv. cap. 12, de Ref.*), which forbids Canons to obtain substitutes to take their place in the recitation of the divine Office; also of the declaration of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, cited by Fagnano (*in cap. Cum omnes de Constit. n. 28*), whereby bishops, notwithstanding that precept, may permit the Canons to take one another's place in the choral service and other sacred functions, provided such substitution does not occur too frequently.

In another decree, the Sacred Congregation has declared that this is applicable only in favor of resident Canons, *inter præsentes*, that is, as was explained in another decree, when the Canon who obtains the substitute resides in the city or its suburbs, if these be not too far distant, say about half a mile, so that he may conveniently reach the church in time for service.

In virtue, therefore, of the faculty granted us by the Sacred Congregation, we hereby concede to all the capitulars the privilege of substituting another of their companions to take their place in the choir and at other ecclesiastical functions, but only once or, at most, twice a week,

provided, however, the Canon substituted be not himself obliged to choir duty, and the one who obtains the substitute, be at the time a resident of the place, as required by the Sacred Congregation in the decree cited above.

After an old copy preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 349.

To the Archpriests, Parish Priests, Rectors, and Confessors of the Diocese.

Notification II.

[End of 1764.]

I. In the first place, we renew an ordinance published by us in 1762, in which we commanded that, on all feasts, the pastors and other priests who say Mass in the parish churches, or in other churches or chapels, even though in country places, should read for the people the abridgment of Christian doctrine which we had printed on a special sheet. This reading shall take place twice on all feasts, namely, at the first Mass, and again at that Mass at which the greatest number of people is present.

II. We command, also, all the pastors to be extremely solicitous in seeing that the catechism is taught to the children every Sunday afternoon. For this work, they may call to their aid other priests, and particularly the clerics attached to their parish churches, who are obliged to attend to this duty. Every pastor, however, shall himself take part in this work regularly, or at least very frequently, and if he does not conduct the instruction, he shall, at least, be present to see how it is given by the others. It should be borne in mind that it is not sufficient to recite for the children the abridgment of Christian doctrine which is read during Mass; for it is not enough that they know by rote the truths of our holy faith, they should be made to under-

stand according to their respective abilities what is read to them. During Lent, the pastors shall instruct them every day for several weeks before Holy Week, particularly in regard to Easter Communion, which the children should ordinarily receive about the age of nine or ten years, or certainly at twelve. We are grieved to learn that, in some parts of the diocese, there are children of fourteen and fifteen years that have not yet made their First Communion. The pastors shall give particular attention to teaching the children the acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition, introducing each act with the motives proper to it. They shall, likewise, impress on the minds of the little ones that no one can obtain salvation, or have the grace and strength to conquer temptation, unless he prays and recommends himself to God, and asks him for these graces. The pastors shall, also, carefully examine those about to be married, upon the teaching of our holy faith, as Benedict XIV. commands; and they shall warn the contracting parties that no marriage-license will be issued to them from our chancery if they cannot present, together with the other requisite papers, a certificate from their pastor to show that they are sufficiently instructed in all that a Christian should know.

III. We remind the parish priests of the strict obligation incumbent upon them to preach every Sunday. It is the common teaching of theologians, that a parish priest who neglects to preach for one month continuously, or for three months interruptedly, cannot be excused from mortal sin. Let the sermon be short; not more than twenty minutes or, at most, half an hour, including the act of contrition, which it is always well to make with the people at the end of the sermon. In their sermons, let them attend chiefly to the following points:

1. Frequently to speak upon the eternal truths, as the consideration of them is most powerful in bringing sinners back to God.

2. The loss of innumerable souls who go to perdition, on account of sins concealed in confession through shame.—And here let us again recommend to the pastors to have a strange confessor in their churches once a month.

3. To inveigh against parents who allow young men to visit their houses who may be to their daughters an occasion of sin. They shall admonish such parents that, failing in this respect, they fall under the reserved case to which excommunication is attached.

4. Often to inculcate the invocation of Jesus and Mary in the time of temptation, and to ask of Almighty God the grace of final perseverance.

5. They should exhort the faithful to recommend themselves to the Blessed Virgin; and at the end of every sermon, they shall make them ask for some particular grace from the Mother of God.

It would be well for all parish priests to read what is said in our *Instruction* [1] in the vernacular with regard to those practical matters which may be brought before the people with the greatest profit. They will find this subject treated in chapter vii. from number 36 to 44 inclusive. Above all things, let them be carefnl to use popular language, in keeping with the capabilities of the poor people, as is commanded by the Council of Trent; otherwise, the sermons will remain quite useless, as if they had never been preached.

IV. We again call to mind and renew our ordinance in regard to the Easter Communion of the faithful.

1. As a general rule, no one shall be admitted to the sacrament of Penance by any confessor, unless he can present a certificate signed by his pastor, testifying that the bearer has been examined and approved with regard to the necessary knowledge in matters of faith. A similar examination, according to the regulation of Benedict XIV., shall

[1] "Instruction and Practice for Confessors."

be made by the pastor of all who desire to enter into matrimony, before such parties shall be permitted to plight their troth.

2. When making the visitation of his parish during Lent, the pastor shall give to each one the ticket for Easter Communion. On the back of this ticket shall be written the name of the communicant, so that, at the expiration of the Paschal season, the pastor may be able to know from the tickets returned who has fulfilled his Easter duty and who has not.

3. It is our wish that these Communion-tickets, which are to be returned by the parishioners before receiving holy Communion, shall be received by the pastor himself, and by no one else; for we have learned to our sorrow that in some places the tickets have been taken up by others; and, in consequence of this negligence, some have not fulfilled the Paschal precept.

4. Pastors shall again inform their people that those who do not receive the Easter Communion at their own parish church, even if they do so at our cathedral of Sant' Agata, do not fulfil the precept, and will be excommunicated.

5. After Trinity Sunday, should there be any who have not complied with their Easter duty, the pastors shall denounce them to us immediately and without the least human respect, in order that we may proceed against such persons with proper severity.

6. Besides the Communion at Easter, we recommend the pastors to have a general Communion of the children every year on the Sunday within the octave of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady and on Christmas.

V. In giving testimonials of such as are to be promoted to Holy Orders, we desire pastors to pay attention to the following items: 1. To state what is their behavior and how people speak of them; whether they have always worn the ecclesiastical attire, and refrained from playing cards, join-

ing in the chase, or associating with companions of suspicious character, as all these things are forbidden them. 2. Whether they have been of assistance to the church, by being present in the morning to serve Mass on feasts, and in the afternoon on Sundays at the catechism, which it is their duty to teach to the children. 3. Whether they have gone to confession and Communion every two weeks according to their rule. If there has been any delinquency with regard to any of these points, we desire that the number of times be given. In this matter we burden the conscience of all pastors.

VI. Pastors shall not assist at the betrothment of persons, unless they have assured themselves that the marriage is to take place in the near future.

VII. With regard to the sacraments of holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, pastors should bear in mind that the Viaticum should be administered whenever the sick person is in danger of death, that is, when the sickness appears to be mortal. As to Extreme Unction, Pope Benedict XIV. in Bull liii. entitled, *Euchologium Græcorum*, or, "Ritual of the Greeks" (fourth volume of the *Bullarium*), says, at number 46, that this sacrament may be administered whenever the sick person suffers from a serious illness, that is, when there is a reasonable fear that death will ensue. Whenever, then, the holy Viaticum can be given, Extreme Unction also may be administered. And according to the Roman Catechism, *Extreme Unction. n. 18*, those pastors are guilty of grievous sin who defer the administration of this sacrament until the sick person has already begun to lose his senses.

VIII. With regard to the obligations connected with Masses left by testators, we ordain as follows:

1. In every sacristy there shall be placed a tablet containing a list of all the Masses which the resident or other

priests are obliged to say; the days on which they are to be said, at which altar, and for whom to be applied; also, the name of the benefactors or of those who made such foundations.

2. All pastors, rectors, économes, and procurators of churches, chapels, and other pious places, shall do their utmost to obtain from the heirs or executors within one month after the death of the testators, the legacies set apart for pious purposes; and should the latter prove dilatory in paying such legacies, they shall prosecute them before the competent tribunal. If there is no other way of compelling them, they shall, at least, give immediate notice to us, that we may be able to take suitable measures to force them to do so.

3. We again call to mind, and, if necessary, hereby renew our ordinance requiring all rectors or chaplains previously to accepting any legacy for Masses, to obtain the permission of our chancery, in order to ascertain whether such burdens can be assumed, and whether the respective chaplains can suitably comply with such obligation.

IX. On Holy Thursday the pastors of the several parishes shall read or have read during the parish Mass the list of reserved cases. This shall be done in a clear and distinct voice, and with the necessary pauses, so that the faithful may easily understand what is said.

X. No corpse shall be interred before an interval of fifteen or, at least, twelve hours. They who have died suddenly shall not be buried before twenty-four hours have elapsed.

XI. We expressly forbid parish priests to entrust to clerics, and much less to lay persons, the keys of the tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept, or of the ambry in which the holy oils are preserved. Moreover, in regard to the holy oils, we strictly forbid to entrust the carrying of

them to the parochial churches to anyone who is not a priest, or, at least, in Sacred Orders, as also, to give these oils in charge of others than those just mentioned.

XII. We, furthermore, command all pastors, rectors of churches, and beneficiaries to keep an inventory of all that belongs to their respective churches or chapels, and to draw up this inventory anew, at least, every ten years. Should it happen that there is no such record in their churches or chapels, or that it has not been rearranged for ten years, they shall, within six months of this notification, make such an inventory, one copy of which shall be preserved in the archives of the church, and another forwarded to us to be kept in the archives of our chancery. We also command the rural deans to inform us at once upon the death of any beneficiary of their districts.

XIII. Pastors shall remember that they have the grave obligation of residing in the place confided to their care, and that they are not to go away except for an urgent reason and with the permission of the bishop, whose duty it is to examine the reason and to approve the substitute provided by the pastor to take his place during his absence. If remiss in observing this obligation of residence, pastors should bear in mind that they not only sin grievously, but that they also lose all title to the revenues of their charge, and are obliged to make restitution according to the duration of their absence either to the poor of the parish or to the adornment of their church. The same obligation of restitution rests on all those pastors whose residence is useless. On this subject the Sacred Congregation of the Council has declared that the residence of a pastor is useless if for two months he neglects to perform in person the principal duties of his sacred ministry, namely, to preach, and to administer the sacraments, particularly those of penance and holy Eucharist, as often as he is required.

XIV. Pastors shall furthermore remember that they must

reside in the presbytery belonging to their churches, or at least, in some house in the vicinity, from which they may easily repair to the church, and to which the parishioners can have easy access when in need of the sacraments.

XV. They shall also bear in mind that, by virtue of the declaration of Benedict XIV. contained in the Bull, *Cum semper* of the year 1744, they are obliged to apply the holy Mass for their people on all Sundays and holydays of the year, even though the revenue be not sufficient, all custom already introduced or to be introduced to the contrary notwithstanding.

XVI. Finally, pastors shall remember that they are in justice bound, and at times even at the risk of their life, to reprehend those who are living in sin or in the proximate occasion of sin; and this not merely in extreme necessity of their subjects, but also in grave necessity, whenever there is hope of amendment. Should they fail in this duty, they are bound in conscience to make restitution of a part of the revenue derived from their position.

In conclusion, pastors are recommended to inform their people that Clement XII. grants an indulgence of one hundred days to those who recite the Psalm *De profundis* and one *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* with the versicle, *Eternal rest, etc.*, at the sound of the bell at night-fall. Whoever says these prayers for a year, may gain a plenary indulgence on a day of his choice, provided on that day he receives the sacraments of penance and holy Eucharist, and prays for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

After an old copy.

LETTER 350.

To the Confessors of the Diocese, Secular and Regular.

Notification III.

[End of 1764.]

I. The priests to whom we have given faculties to hear confessions shall bear in mind that it is not this approbation of the bishop that will suffice to free them from accountability before God for the discharge of this duty; but only the approbation of Jesus Christ, our Judge, who, at the moment of death, will examine whether they have performed this duty well or not. What we wish to say is that the confessor who wishes to discharge his office well, should never lay aside the study of Moral Theology. Indeed, this science is not so easy as many think; on the contrary, it is very difficult. It covers a broad field by reason of the innumerable circumstances that may enter into cases of conscience, therefore, something new is always learned in its study;—as also, because of the numerous positive laws that exist nowadays. Whence it comes that, if a confessor lays his books aside, he will soon forget what he has learned. We, therefore, recommend all to be diligent in the study of Moral Theology, especially when cases of graver import occur; as, for example, in contracts, the obligation of restitution, the impediments of matrimony and the like. When such cases occur, it is frequently necessary, besides consulting one's books, to seek also the advice of learned men.

II. In our *Notification to the Clergy* we have treated the manner of conducting the weekly conferences on moral cases, and we advise all priests to attend these conferences, if they desire to be considered when promotions to benefices are to be made. The confessors, however, we absolutely command to be present at all such conferences; and let

them remember that if they absent themselves three times without a reasonable cause, of which they shall apprise the prefect and receive his permission to remain away, they will have some difficulty in obtaining a renewal of their faculties. We desire the secretary of the conference, therefore, to send us the names of all absentees, confessors or non-confessors, twice a year, namely, at the end of June and in December, so that we may regulate our actions accordingly.

III. We command all confessors to ask fathers and mothers when they come to confession, whether they always send their children to the instruction on Christian doctrine; and if they find them remiss in this regard, to deny them absolution, as this is a case reserved to us.

IV. We again renew our ordinance to confessors not to admit to the sacrament of Penance during the Paschal season those who produce no certificate signed by the pastor, stating that they are well instructed in the fundamental doctrines of the faith. This is to be understood, however, as applicable only when the confessor has a prudent doubt as to whether the penitent is so instructed.

V. Furthermore, when persons of whose state of conscience they have no knowledge, come to confession, we recommend the confessors to inquire whether they have any scruple with regard to omitting sins in confession out of shame.

VI. Let them be careful not to absolve those whom they find to be in the proximate and voluntary occasion of sin, before such occasion is effectually removed. And even if the occasion be necessary, they should, nevertheless, defer absolution to such penitents, until, after sufficient probation, it is evident that the proximate occasion has become remote. Above all, let them be careful not to absolve engaged parties and other young persons who are keeping company, and are much in the companionship of their mistresses, unless every occasion of sin be entirely removed;

for even if there is no present evil, it will surely come to pass if the occasion is allowed to exist. Confessors shall, also, resolutely refuse absolution to parents or other heads of families who allow men and women to remain together alone, in the danger of committing sin, unless all such dangerous intercourse is effectually stopped. Let them remind such persons that, failing in this regard, they come under the reserved case to which excommunication is attached.

VII. Confessors shall, likewise, take care not to absolve at once those who are in the habit of sin, or who are relapsing sinners, particularly with regard to blasphemy and impurity, unless, upon trial and amendment, they give sufficient proof that they have changed their lives; or unless in their present confession they give some extraordinary sign of their actual good dispositions. What these signs are may be found in our *Moral Theology*, and every confessor should have them before his mind, in order to regulate himself accordingly in granting absolution.

VIII. When physicians come to confession, the confessors shall admonish them of the grave obligation incumbent upon them of reminding their patients to make their confession as soon as there is a doubt as to whether the sickness is mortal or may become so. If the sick will not go to confession, the physician, according to the Bull of St. Pius V., is obliged to discontinue his visits after the third day.

IX. When penitents confess venial sins only, the confessors shall not absolve them unless they feel sure that they are really sorry for these sins, and purpose to amend at least one or the other of them. Should the confessors doubt about the penitent's dispositions with regard to sins actually confessed, they shall require him to accuse himself of some

sin of his past life, already confessed, for which he is heartily sorry.

X. Let them avoid imposing under pain of mortal sin penances which they foresee the penitent will not readily perform.

XI. Let them continually and fervently exhort such penitents as are wont to relapse into mortal sin, to ask Almighty God frequently during the day for the grace of perseverance, and in temptations to have immediate recourse to our dear Lord and his Blessed Mother, repeating again and again, "Jesus and Mary", while the temptation continues to assail them. Prayer is the best and most necessary of all remedies to preserve one's self in the grace of God; but, unfortunately, it is the least recommended to penitents. We, therefore, exhort all our confessors to induce their penitents, and especially those who are spiritually weak, to make use of it.

XII. They shall endeavor to lead to the practice of mental prayer such of their penitents as they find more inclined to piety, particularly the young. Let them, also, be so charitable as to instruct them briefly at first in the manner of making this exercise. Later on, they should inquire whether they have practised it, and should they have neglected to do so, they shall reprimand them severely. In this way, confessors will be able to lead many souls to sanctity. It is thus that confessors who truly love God are accustomed to act.

Let them not forget to inculcate upon all, the devout as well as sinners, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the recitation of the rosary, the observance of the novenas preceding her feasts, and especially to recommend themselves to her saying every night and morning three *Hail Marys*, that she may preserve them from mortal sin. It is, indeed,

most difficult for anyone to persevere in the grace of God and be saved without a particular devotion to the Mother of God, who, on this account is called the Mother of Perseverance.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 351.

To the Secular Clergy.

Notification IV.

[End of 1764.]

I. Our priests are recommended frequently to attend the conferences on cases of conscience. In the Bull *Apostolici ministerii*, Innocent XIII. admonishes bishops not to ordain to the priesthood anyone that is not well versed, at least in Moral Theology: *Episcopos in Domino hortamur ut, quantum fieri potest, eos tantum ad sacerdotium assumant, qui saltem theologiæ moralis competenter periti sunt.* Holy Scripture declares that the priest should know whatever is necessary to clear up all doubts that may be referred to him concerning the law of God: *Labia sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore ejus.—Mal.* ii. 7. It were a shame for a priest not to be able to decide the cases of conscience that are brought to him by the faithful. We, therefore, exhort all our priests to attend the conferences on cases of conscience, which shall be conducted in every district of our diocese in the following manner:—

That everyone may come prepared, the names of all shall be placed in an urn; and he whose name shall be drawn, shall answer the question proposed. This question shall be the same that was announced on the tablet in the preceding conference. After it has been answered, opportunity shall be afforded the other priests to bring forward their objections, to which the defender shall respond.

When the discussion has lasted a reasonable time, the prefect shall give a signal with the little bell, which everyone shall at once obey and be silent; otherwise, matters would be prolonged to too great length. Then he who has been appointed judge, shall decide the question according to the opinion which appears to him more probable. It must be borne in mind that the ticket bearing the name of him who was chosen to answer the question, shall be returned to the urn; and it does not matter that the same priest may be again called upon by lot in the next conference. If the names that have once been drawn, were not put back into the urn until all the others had been taken out, it might easily happen that those upon whom the lot had already fallen, would refrain all the rest of the time from studying the questions proposed. The secretary of the conference shall, without any human respect, note down the names of absentees, for when confessors come to us for a renewal of their faculties, they must bring with them a certificate of regular attendance from him. Should they have absented themselves three times without a reasonable excuse and without the permission of the prefect, they will experience some difficulty in obtaining the renewal they ask. Those priests, however, who are not confessors, shall not be subjected to any penalties; but in the conferring of benefices, and particularly of parishes, they will either not be admitted to the *concursus*, or at least, will not find that favor in our eyes which will be shown to those who have attended the conferences.

II. We again call to your minds, and hereby renew the suspension to be incurred *ipso facto* by those who say Mass in less than a quarter of an hour, even though it be the votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin or the requiem Mass. We also recommend to priests devout preparation for the holy Sacrifice, particularly when they are already vested. Let them not then walk about the sacristy or talk to others.

We recommend, likewise, the thanksgiving after Mass for half, or at least, a quarter of an hour.

III. We remind you of the grave obligation of every priest not to defer the celebration of a Mass for which he has received a stipend, more than two months, if the Mass is for the living, or one month, if it is for the faithful departed. To be free from all danger of grievous sin, he should celebrate it within this time, at least.

IV. We renew, also, the suspension to be incurred *ipso facto* by those priests and other ecclesiastics in Sacred Orders, who join in games of chance, such as basset, primero, dice, and the like; or who play in public at games that are allowed.

V. We forbid all priests and clerics to join in any sort of chase whether with gun or snare, without our express permission in writing. Let them remember, however, that this permission will not be granted for holydays of obligation.

VI. We, likewise, forbid all ecclesiastics of our diocese to take part in plays, even though of a sacred character and presented in private houses. A violation of this regulation by those in Sacred Orders will be punished with suspension; by those in Minor Orders, with irregularity preventing their advancement to the Sacred Orders.

VII. We forbid all ecclesiastics to take in charge taxes or other public trusts, even should this be done under an assumed name or in partnership with others.

VIII. We recommend young priests to assist the respective pastors in teaching catechism to the children on Sundays. Let them know that those who have been diligent in this holy exercise, will find special favor with us when there is question of promoting to benefices or conferring other emoluments.

IX. The rectors of churches shall keep a book in which shall be recorded the Masses said by those priests who

have such obligation. This record, for which a new book shall be substituted every year, shall exhibit, also, all the obligations of the respective churches, with the name of the testator, and the number of Masses that are to be said. Here, too, with each account shall be given the page on which the several obligations are mentioned in detail; and at the end, shall be placed the number of Masses that have been said during the year in satisfaction of these obligations.

X. Finally, the rectors shall see that during the celebration of holy Mass the crucifix on the altar is so placed as to be higher than the second row of candelabra, and that it is of such proportions as to be seen easily not only by the celebrant himself, but also by the faithful who are present.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 352.

To the Candidates for Holy Orders.

Notification V.

[End of 1764.]

One of the most important duties of a bishop is to see that those who wish to be promoted to Holy Orders, are not unworthy of the dignity; for if they are unworthy, he becomes accountable before God, as the Council of Trent teaches, for all the sins they will commit after their ordination. We, therefore, make known by these presents to all who aspire to such promotion, the requisites they must possess, particularly with regard to patrimony, conduct, and learning.

I. With regard to patrimony, it should be remembered that in the Concordat [1] it is stipulated that no one can receive tonsure unless he has a title to a benefice or a per-

1 The Concordat between the Holy See and Carlo III. King of Naples, published in 1741.

petual chaplaincy whose revenues, after all expenses have been deducted, amount to, at least, one-half of the patrimony required, that is, thirteen ducats annually, since the established amount in this diocese is twenty-six ducats. Only in case the bishop deems it necessary or really useful for any church to confer tonsure upon a candidate, can he do so, that is, ordain him upon the title of the patrimony alone without his having a benefice, provided the entire patrimony is based upon immovable property or fixed annual revenues. These are the requirements of the Concordat. Furthermore, it requires that, before receiving tonsure, the aspirant shall have resided three years in some seminary or other ecclesiastical establishment, or at least, where the foregoing is not possible, worn the clerical habit with the permission of the bishop, and served in some church to which he was assigned by the ordinary.

All aspirants to Holy Orders in our diocese, therefore, shall bear in mind that a strict examination will be instituted by our chancery with regard to their patrimony, and the sources, revenues, and estimated value thereof. The estimated value upon which this patrimony is based must be, at least, five hundred ducats, and this amount shall not involve any injury to the legal share or portion due to brothers or sisters.

II. With respect to conduct, the aspirant to Holy Orders, besides the certificate of the prefect of the conferences on moral cases testifying that he has attended, and the testimonial of our chancery that he labors under no canonical impediment, shall present the sworn testimony of his parish priest in regard to the following points:—1. That he has been regular in serving Mass in the parochial church on all Sundays and holydays of obligation, and has taught catechism to the children there every Sunday, after having collected them from the streets. 2. That he has frequented

the sacraments of Penance and holy Eucharist every two weeks.—It is said above that clerics should assist in their parish churches on holydays of obligation; but it is our wish that they be present also on other days either in their own or some other church, to hear Mass, make a visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament, or spend some time in prayer. Upon this point, also, we desire to have the testimony of the parish priests, and for this purpose the pastors shall ascertain whether the candidates for ordination have been to church on days that are not festivals of obligation. 3. That he has always worn the long soutane, that he has not taken part in any game with cards or joined the chase, as these things are strictly forbidden to our clerics.

III. As to the learning requisite, we once more inform all our clerics of the treatises in which they must be proficient in order to be admitted to Holy Orders.

Besides a thorough knowledge of Christian doctrine, and the manner of making mental prayer in all its parts, and besides the knowledge of what pertains to the particular Order which they are to receive, those who desire to be promoted to Minor Orders shall know all that pertains to the sacraments, namely, the matter, form, reception and administration of each.

Subdeacons, besides the knowledge of what pertains to the subdeaconship, will be required to know the five following treatises: Orders in general, Oaths, Vows, the Canonical Hours, and Censures.

They who aspire to the deaconship will be required to know what belongs to this Order, and also the following treatises in detail: Conscience, Laws, Human Acts, and Sin, the First Commandment, including all the treatises that come under this head, namely, the theological virtues, charity toward our neighbor, religion and the vices opposed to it, as superstition, tempting God, sacrilege, and

simony; and, finally, the Second Commandment, that is, blasphemy only, because oaths and vows will form a part of the examination previous to subdeaconship.

Aspirants to the priesthood will be required to know what pertains to the Order of priesthood, the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the Sacrifice of the Mass, also all the treatises dealing with the remaining Commandments of God and of the Church,—the First and Second Commandments are here excepted because they formed a part of preceding examinations. Moreover, these candidates shall know the treatises on the sacraments of Penance, Extreme Unction, and Matrimony.

Let no one say that here we require of aspirants greater learning than is demanded by the Council of Trent; for speaking of those who are to be elevated to the priesthood, the Council says: *Ad administranda sacramenta diligenti examine idonei comprobentur. Sess. xxiii. cap. 14 de Ref.* Of all the sacraments, one of the most necessary is the sacrament of Penance, and to administer it every priest should be thoroughly prepared. Moreover, in the Bull *Apostolici ministerii* of Innocent XIII., confirmed by that of Benedict XIII., *In supremo*, it is said: *Episcopos in Domino hortamur ut, quantum fieri potest, eos tantum ad sacerdotium assumant, qui saltem theologiæ moralis competenter periti sunt.*

Candidates for ordination shall, also, bear in mind that, in order to be promoted, they must present their petitions some time previously, and together. For Christmas ordinations petitions and testimonials should be presented in the first week of November; for the ordinations during Lent, in the week preceding Septuagesima Sunday; for the ordinations at Pentecost, during Easter week; and for the September ordinations, in the first week of August.

Furthermore, before receiving Holy Orders, the candidates shall make the spiritual exercises either in one of the

houses of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, or with the Fathers of the Mission, at Naples.

Those who are to receive tonsure or Minor Orders shall make a retreat, at least once, before receiving these respective Orders, so that before they are promoted to the subdeaconship and bind themselves by vow, they may know the obligations they are taking upon themselves.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 353.

To the Priests and Clerics.

Notification VI.

[End of 1764.]

Vanity in dress is something quite incompatible with the ecclesiastical state, and the cause of seculars losing that veneration which is due to the ministers of Jesus Christ. We, therefore, make the following regulations with regard to this matter.

The style of wearing the hair short is a mark by which ecclesiastics should be distinguishable from seculars. For this reason Alexander III. (*cap. cler.* 7, *de vita et honesta cler.*) required that clerics who wore the hair too long, should have it cut off by the archdeacons: *Clerici, qui comam nutriunt, etiam inviti, a suis archidiaconis tondeantur.* We, therefore, command that no ecclesiastic shall wear the hair long, much less should it be curled and powdered; and everyone shall take care not to let it grow so long that it falls upon the neck and over the ears. In particular, we require the clerics to wear the hair short, as do the seminarists, otherwise they will not be permitted to receive any Orders whatever.

The tonsure on the crown of the head shall be in the case of priests, the size of a large host; in that of deacons,

somewhat smaller, and so on proportionally in the inferior clergy; but in no case shall it be smaller than a small host. We recommend all, and particularly the priests, to have the tonsure renewed at least every two weeks.

II. Everyone knows that the soutane is the proper garment for ecclesiastics, as may be seen in the numerous canons quoted by Benedict XIV., *De Synodo, lib. xi. c. 8, n. 1.* We, therefore, ordain that the clerics shall always wear the long soutane, by which we mean, not the zimar, but the one which buttons in front. And we desire pastors to state in their testimonials of candidates for ordination, whether the cleric has always worn the soutane or not. As for the priests, let them wear the soutane at least when going to celebrate holy Mass, recite the divine Office in choir, or perform any other ecclesiastical function that requires them to use the surplice.

But since many places in our diocese are cold and damp, and especially since a number of the priests have to travel considerable distances to say Mass, we shall be satisfied if during the winter season, that is, from November to the end of April, they dress in civilian attire, provided they wear the long soutane with sleeves while celebrating Mass and reciting the Office, as in these cases the civilian dress is prohibited. From May to November, however, they should, as has been said, wear the long soutane in the forenoon; otherwise, they will incur *ipso facto* the suspension already decreed by us in this regard.

We forbid all priests and clerics to go about without the Roman collar, or to wear overcoats or mantles of any color save black. The use of such articles is conceded only to those priests who go about in the country or are traveling, and then only upon condition, that they have no buttons or buttonholes worked with gold thread. We, also, pro-

hibit the wearing of lace-pointed, or frilled cuffs at the end of the sleeves.

It will be seen that in what we have herein ordained, we have not adhered to the ancient rigor of the canons, but have had regard for the circumstances of the present. We call attention to this fact, that all may understand that, in proportion as we have been lenient and indulgent in making these regulations, we shall prosecute with severity him who transgresses them.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 354.

To Don Francesco di Filippo, Archpriest of Frasso.

Orders relative to the execution of the foregoing notifications.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

SANT' AGATA, April 19, 1765.

Most Illustrious and Reverend Sir: We desire you to inform us whether all the priests and clerics were present at the reading of our notifications; and should anyone have been absent you will advise him to read over that one of them which particularly concerns the class to which he belongs.

We, furthermore, desire you to keep an account of any disobedience to whatever we have ordained, so that, in June, you may be able to send us intelligence of all these violations. We have, indeed, made but a small number of regulations, and these only after much deliberation; but in them we will be obeyed. Whoever will not obey, will infallibly be punished; for unless punishment were meted

out to offenders, the regulations issued would but serve to make the Superior despised.

Awaiting your reply acknowledging the receipt of this letter, we grant you our blessing.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 355.

To the Sacred Congregation of the Council.

First report of the saint upon the condition of the diocese.

SANT' AGATA DE' GOTI, July 8, 1765.

Most Eminent and Reverend Fathers: Elevated to the See of Sant' Agata by the grace of God and of the Sovereign Pontiff, in June, 1762, in spite of my unworthiness, I fulfilled the requirements of the visit to the tombs of the Apostles for the fifty-ninth triennium of the Sixtine Visitation, during my sojourn in Rome on matters connected with my promotion. Now as the sixtieth triennium of the same Visitation is drawing to a close, and I have learned to know my flock, all of whom I have visited in the interval, I submit to your Eminences in all humility the following report of the condition of my diocese, in so far as it is given to my poor judgment to possess an exact knowledge thereof. My advanced age, however, and almost continual infirmities prevent me from discharging this duty in person. I therefore transmit this report by messenger.[1]

The Material Condition of the Diocese.

Sant' Agata, situated on a table-land surrounded by mountains down whose sides rush wild torrents, is said to have derived its name from the Goths who in early times sought refuge here, and is by no means an insignificant city. It belongs to the kingdom of Naples and is subject to the

[1] This messenger was the Abbate Francesco Puoti, of whom mention was made in *General Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 132, note.

feudal tenure of the Duke of Maddaloni. It is in the province known as, "Beyond the Mountains", and occupies a central position in the diocese.

Among the remarkable relics, carefully preserved in their respective silver cases, with which the cathedral is enriched, are the middle finger of St. Agatha, virgin and martyr, and a particle of the bones of St. Stephen, the first martyr,—the chief patrons and titulars of the church; also the greater part of the body and the entire arm of St. Menna, anchoret, who is, likewise, the patron of the city.

The cathedral is under the title of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. It was consecrated in 1763, and is subject to the metropolitan of Benevento. It stands in the very heart of the city. It is a beautiful and substantial edifice, and was built by my predecessors. It is divided into three large naves, not to speak of the side chapels with their respective altars, partly of polished marble, partly of stucco, all symmetrically arranged in the interior. At present, it is sufficiently provided with all that is needed in the way of ecclesiastical furniture, and I am prepared to enrich it even more in the future.

The palace, by no means an unbecoming structure, adjoins the cathedral. As the entire series of buildings was on the verge of ruin, I took care to remedy the evil during the past year. There is now no further need of repairs.

With regard to the support of the bishop, this diocese has no reason to be envious of others. Its revenues, however, are burdened to the extent of sixty *scudi*, Roman currency, an annual pension to be paid to the priest Don Blasio Fioravanti. From the revenues, also, are to be defrayed the expenses of repairing the cathedral in case of necessity, and of keeping it in order; likewise, of providing whatever ecclesiastical paraphernalia may be required in the sacristy, as neither cathedral nor sacristy has any revenues to be devoted to such purposes.

Besides the episcopal city, the diocese comprises many cities and towns: Arienzo, situated in Campania Felix, and with its suburbs, the second city of the diocese; Arpaia and its dependency Forchia, so called from the passage of the Caudine Forks; Airola, raised to the rank of a city a few years ago, with its dependencies, Moiano, Luzzano, Bucciano, and Pastorano. A fifth city is Frasso, another Valle, and, lastly, Durrazzano with its dependencies, Cervini and Furculi. The towns are three in number: Bagnoli, Dugenta, and Cancello in the neighborhood of Arienzo. Each of these has its own archpriest, who has also the care of the souls of the farmers and domestics living there. Cancello, however, as will be mentioned later on, is an exception to this rule.

Of these three towns, the principal one is Bagnoli. The bishop is baron of this place, and holds a feudal tenure over it. Every year he appoints the governor to administer justice in cases of civil and mixed jurisdiction; for with regard to crimes involving sentence of death, the jurisdiction is reserved to the illustrious Duke of Maddaloni.

The Condition of the Churches and Pious Places.

The cathedral chapter comprises thirty-one capitulars, all of whom wear rochet and mozetta. Among them are five dignitaries, an archdeacon, a dean, two *primicerii*, and a treasurer. These dignitaries, as also the Canons with few exceptions, have prebends distinct from the common fund. The capitulars attend service in choir in alternate weeks, but all are present on Sundays and feasts, and during Advent and Lent. Those who are present receive their share from the common fund, and the absent forfeit theirs. The laudable custom obtains here of having all the capitulars priests exercising the office of confessors, beginning with the dean, to whose office the dignity of Penitentiary is annexed, and who according to the prescriptions of the

sacred canons, is always prepared to hear confessions when called upon by the faithful. There is also in the chapter a Canon theologian who, in obedience to the regulations of the bishop, gives on certain days at stated times an explanation of the Holy Scriptures.

To the above-mentioned capitulars, must be added fourteen choir chaplains who during alternate weeks, assist the Canons in the recitation of the divine Office and the services of the church.

Daily the capitulars fulfil the obligation of saying Mass for benefactors.

Finally, to the service of the cathedral are deputed one sacristan and four clerics, making in all fifty, who are engaged in attending on the church.

Besides the cathedral, the city possesses two perpetual curacies, in charge of which are two priests who have the care of souls within certain prescribed limits. One of these priests belongs to the cathedral, in which in default of a church of his own, he administers the sacraments and discharges the other duties pertaining to the guidance of souls. The other comes, also, to the cathedral to administer the sacraments, to give certain blessings, and to hear confessions. He uses his own church, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, situated within the city limits, only for Mass and preaching on Sundays and holydays of obligation. Although these curacies, in the event of vacancy, are conferred with the previous nomination of the cathedral chapter, which for many years past has had the sole care of souls, they are, nevertheless, subject to the law of alternation in the different months.

In one of the hamlets of this city, about two miles distant, there existed only the perpetual curacy of S. Tommaso di Aquino. This church, built in a mountainous region, embraced a very large area in its supervision, and comprised within its limits several distant places of the surrounding

country. As a consequence, the parishioners were not able to attend there to hear the word of God and to receive the sacraments, without considerable difficulty. Still less could the aged, girls, and the ignorant come to receive instruction in the rudiments of the faith. On the other hand, the pastor could not easily attend to the spiritual needs of these distant parishioners. My predecessor of happy memory,[1] therefore, in accordance with the prescriptions of the Council of Trent, erected two other parishes in more convenient places within the limits of the old parish of S. Tommaso, giving the new churches thus formed the funds of several simple benefices as their sources of revenue. One of these churches was dedicated to S. Pietro di Romagnano, the other to S. Michele the Archangel. The establishment of these parishes was, however, far from complete, because the churches designated for their use were in great need of repair and possessed neither adornment of any kind nor even the necessary furniture. Relying upon the assistance of Divine Providence, I at once set about to bring so useful and necessary a work to completion. I fitted up the church of S. Pietro, and took steps to finish the church of S. Michele the Archangel, whose foundation was already begun. Out of their present insignificant income, I also provided both churches with suitable furniture, and sent thither two parish priests, who had been previously nominated by the cathedral chapter, to which, as in the case of S. Tommaso's parish, that right belonged; for whenever a vacancy occurred there, it was provided for by the nomination of the chapter and the approbation of the bishop. At present, thanks be to God, the Gospel is preached every Sunday and holyday, the sacraments are administered, and the faithful come thither without any inconvenience whatever to

[1] Muzio Gaeta, born in Naples, October 26, 1686, was Bishop of Sant' Agata from 1722 to 1735, and was succeeded in that year by Flaminio Danza, the immediate predecessor of the saint.

share these blessings and to perform various acts of piety.

Still even these two parishes did not sufficiently meet the necessities of all belonging to the parish of S. Tommaso. There were other country places, two or three miles off, whose people experienced extreme difficulty in attending at S. Tommaso's on account of the distance and the wretched condition of the roads, particularly in winter. I established, therefore, a third parish, that of the Annunziata, designating for this purpose the church of that name, the right of presentation to which belonged to the municipality. The church occupies a very convenient position, and for its support I united the revenues of some simple benefices that happened to be vacant at the time. This work was done with the approval of the citizens, who had been previously called together at a public meeting. In this church, also, the sacraments are administered by a parish priest nominated by the chapter and approved by me. In all these perpetual curacies, the obligation of applying the holy Mass for the faithful on Sundays and holydays is carefully fulfilled.

In the last-named church of the Annunziata, subject to the right of patronage of the municipality, in which I have erected the new parish, there are sixteen perpetual chaplains, elected by the lay-trustees who govern the affairs of the church, and approved by the bishop then occupying the See. These chaplains have the obligation of celebrating low Masses and anniversary Masses on the days indicated upon the register, and of saying the Office in choir in accordance with the conditions of the foundation, not only on Sundays and festivals, but likewise, on other days.

Besides the parochial churches of the city and its suburbs herein enumerated, there are in Sant' Agata nine confraternities among the faithful, each of which wears its own peculiar garb. Two of these confraternities have their own

church; the Confraternity of Our Lady of Grace, and that of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin, erected in the church of San Angelo de Munuclano. The remaining five, and particularly that of the Most Blessed Sacrament, have private chapels bearing their respective titles in the cathedral, the church of the Annunziata mentioned above, and the church of the Minor Conventuals of St. Francis. The members of these confraternities attend all public processions, and on all feasts assemble in the church of San Angelo de Munuclano to perform various exercises of piety under the guidance of a spiritual director designated by the bishop.

There are, also, throughout the district of Sant' Agata and the diocese several country churches for the accommodation of the people, in which the holy Sacrifice is offered on Sundays and holydays of obligation. These places are attended by hermits who, desirous of leading a solitary life at a distance from the pleasures of the world, are selected by the bishop after a diligent inquiry as to their good name and previous conduct. They are subject to the surveillance of the neighboring parish priest and the rural dean of the districts in which they live. Once a year, on the feast of St. Menna, the anchoret, they all repair to the cathedral to give an account of their work, and to receive holy Communion.

Among the charitable institutions of the city of Sant' Agata there are only two, under the title of St. Anne, for the relief of the poor. One of them is called, "Of the Pledges", and its president is chosen annually by the cathedral chapter, of which he must be a member; the other is entitled, "Of the Dower". Its annual revenue amounting to nearly eighty ducats, is administered by the *primicerius* of the cathedral, who is obliged to give a dowry every year to five young girls, who must, however, belong to the city and be of good moral character.

Formerly there were two other similar institutions established for the purpose of assisting the poor, a granary built from the private purse of Mgr. Gaeta of happy memory, which contained only two hundred bushels; and a second foundation known as *della Pietà*, whose president was appointed by the municipal authorities and approved by the bishop. These two institutions are no longer in existence.

The seminary which adjoins the episcopal residence is being built almost from the foundation in more spacious and beautiful proportions. The amount hitherto expended in its construction is about five thousand gold ducats, Neapolitan currency. In the course of a few years, I think, this great work will be finished, to the increased convenience of the seminarists, who, meanwhile, are housed in some buildings belonging to the palace which have been fitted up as a seminary, and are entirely separate from my residence and household. The seminarists, seventy in number, are received upon examination from all parts of the city and diocese. They are under the guidance of very competent masters in the various branches, who are to instruct them thoroughly in all that pertains to ecclesiastical knowledge and discipline, particularly scholastic theology, dogmatic as well as moral. The seminary has an annual income of twelve hundred ducats, Neapolitan currency, besides the fees of the students, who pay one-third of their expenses.

I do not omit to pay unexpected visits to the seminary from time to time, in order to ascertain, as the father of a family, the manner in which it is conducted, the progress made in studies, and the observance of the Rules and Constitutions. I pay particular attention to find out whether there is hope that it will bring forth its fruit in due season. With the advice of two Canons chosen by myself, I establish whatever is found necessary or advantageous for the good government of the institution. I attend, also, the

scholastic and dogmatic disputations that are frequently held.

There are in the city and throughout the diocese several convents of regulars. In Sant' Agata there are two: one of the Minor Conventuals of St. Francis, which has its full number of inmates; the other of St. John of God, to which is annexed a hospital, erected upon ground belonging to the bishop, and incorporated with the convent. This hospital, by virtue of a Bull of Pope Gregory IX. of blessed memory, is reserved to the bishop and subject to him in all things, particularly with regard to the Canonical Visitation. The care of the sick is in charge of the Hospital Brothers of St. John of God; and as the building possesses an altar, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered up regularly on all days of obligation for the convenience of the inmates.

There is, also, in the city a convent of Our Lady of Constantinople, which has been brought to completion during my term of office. It has all the necessary living and work-rooms duly arranged, and a church near by. To finish this building, one hundred gold ducats, a somewhat considerable amount, were spent from the revenues of the convent. Up to the present, however, no Sisters have been received. One thing still remains, and it is, indeed, a matter of no small importance, namely, that the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars accede to my request and permit me to unite for the maintenance of this foundation the revenues of some pious places in the city, as the present annual income of the convent is of itself quite unequal to the demands of the institution. It remains, also, for the Congregation to allow the reception of nuns in this convent; and, finally, to grant a petition already submitted to them by the municipal authorities, asking permission to change this conservatory into a convent with enclosure under a Rule already approved by the

Sacred Congregation.[1] The granting of this last request is looked forward to with anxious expectation by the people. As it is hoped for, with God's help, at an early day, so it will be received by them with intense joy.

But if the city can boast only of the two religious institutions just mentioned, the diocese is richly provided with them. There are in all eleven: in the important city of Arienzo, five, namely, that of the Augustinians within the city limits, that of the Congregation of Monte Vergine, with its own Abbot, the Dominicans, the Carmelites, and the Capuchins. Airola has four monasteries: those of the Fathers of the Congregation of Oliveto, and of Monte Vergine, each with its own Abbot, the Dominicans, and the Discalced Fathers of the strict observance of St. Francis. In Durazzano there is a monastery of the Dominicans of the Lombard Province; and in Arpaia the Friars Minor of St. Francis of the strict observance have a monastery. All these monasteries have the complete number of inmates, observe the enclosure according to their Rule, and, with the exception of the Carmelites, are exempt from the jurisdiction of the bishop. The monastery of the Carmelites contains only four members, and is subject to the episcopal jurisdiction. As the most observant of all, I must mention the monastery of the Discalced Franciscans.

1 The request was made in favor of the nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer, and was granted as the saint desired. On June 29, of the following year, 1766, four nuns from Scala took possession of the convent. The work was visibly blessed by Almighty God, and prospered so well that, in his second report, the saint spoke very highly of it to the Sacred Congregation, In several of his letters, he speaks of the nuns as saints. It might be worth remarking here that in this convent were trained those two venerable Mothers who, in 1831, transplanted the Institute of the Redemptoristines to Vienna, in Austria, whence it spread into the other countries of Europe. The Institute and Rule of the Redemptoristines were approved by the Holy See in the Bull *In supremo*, June 8, 1750.

The diocese possesses, also, two convents of nuns and two conservatories, all subject to the bishop. Two of these institutions are in Arienzo: the convent of the Nuns of the Annunciation, of the Rule of the Lateran Canons, and the conservatory with enclosure adjoining the church of S. Filippo Neri, where twenty-three Sisters wearing the habit and following the Rule of the Servites of Mary live, and are entirely under the jurisdiction of the bishop. The other convent of nuns, those of the Third Order, or of St. Elizabeth, is in Airola; and Frasso possesses the second conservatory of Sisters with an adjoining church. This conservatory is under the protection of the crown, and the Sisters follow the Rule of the Venerable Mother Serafia of God. All these nuns and Sisters lead a religious life, and observe their Constitutions with exactness. On my part, I have not failed to promote regular observance among them from time to time by the addition of suitable regulations. The enclosure of these convents is most scrupulously observed, their revenues carefully administered, and the dowries of the religious invested in interest-bearing real estate or in annuties.

The diocese contains three collegiate churches, two of which are *insignes*, one in Arienzo under the title of S. Andrea the Apostle, with a chapter numbering twenty Canons; the other is in Arpaia. It is older than the preceding, but numbers only five Canons. This latter has only two dignitaries, the archpriest and the *primicerius*. There are no prebends whatever, and the support of the capitulars is derived from a common fund known as *grossa*, which, in consequence of the hard times, has been diminished and is, indeed, very small. Nevertheless, the divine Office is recited without intermission.

In the collegiate chapter of Arienzo there are four dignitaries, the archpriest, the *primicerius*, the Canon theologian, whose duty it is to explain Holy Scripture at stated

times, and the treasurer. These dignitaries only have prebends distinct from the common fund. They serve in the choir and in the church with the other Canons during alternate weeks. All the Canons of this church wear the mozetta, and in the event of a vacancy the rule of monthly reservation obtains.

There is a third collegiate church at Frasso, with thirty Canons, all wearing the mozetta, and whose presiding officer is the archpriest. They receive from the common fund a small yearly allowance amounting to eighteen ducats, Neapolitan money, and attend in choir during alternate weeks.

Besides these collegiate churches, there are, also, in different parts of the diocese, churches in which the management is confided to simple priests, as in Frasso, Durazzano, Airola, and Valle, not to mention Bagnoli, Dugenta, and Cancello, already alluded to, each of which has its own archpriest. These have all their own revenues, which are more than abundant, with the exception of Cancello, which is only nominally the residence of an archpriest. Here the care of souls is attended to by the parish priest of the neighboring San Felice, a hamlet of Arienzo, whom I compelled last year to delegate an assistant to that place, in order that the spiritual needs of its people might be better provided for. The above-mentioned places and the hamlets dependent upon them, likewise contain many parishes, each with its own church, pastor, and assistants. In case of vacancies these positions are filled in accordance with the rule of monthly reservation.

There are, also, in the diocese several sodalities generally under the patronage of the saints. I do not think it necessary to give a detailed description of them. As they are all under the protection of the government, though submitting to the Visitation of the bishop, they, as a rule, respect his authority very little in other matters, and, emboldened

by the underhand interference of the government, can hardly be restrained within the bounds of regular discipline. Still, upon occasion, I have not hesitated to oppose them steadfastly.

I should not forget to mention that, in the district of Arienzo, I am erecting for the greater convenience of the people, a new parish church dedicated to S. Nicola.[1] It is on a more suitable site and will be very large and beautiful. This work goes on amid the continual contentions of the municipal authorities and the citizens, which I have done everything I could to quell. In the course of two years, with the help of God, this church will probably be completed, so that the old building, which is altogether too small and mean-looking, can be abandoned. In like manner, also, I have given considerable attention to the repairing of two other churchers of this district, namely, the second parochial church, dedicated to S. Agnese, and the church of S. Pietro in Talanico, both of which have been provided with new walls and flooring.[2]

[1] The first stone of this beautiful edifice was laid March 19, 1763, the feast of the Glorious Patriarch St. Joseph, to whom the saint had a particular devotion.

[2] In order better to understand the zeal with which the saint prosecuted the erection and restoration of the churches in this one district of Arienzo, it will be worth while to relate what is said upon this subject by Brother Francesco Antonio Romito in his deposition. (*Process. Ordin. Nucer., fol.* 1281, *seq.*) "I remember that during the term of his administration of the diocese of Sant' Agata, he forwarded with all his energy the erection of a beautiful church in Santa Maria a Vico, a hamlet of the district of Arienzo, contributing thereto a sum of money himself. The old church of this place which was dedicated to S. Nicola, could not accommodate the number of souls there, which was upward of four thousand. When the new church was finished, he ordered the Pious Workers to resume the missions which had been interrupted on account of the inadequacy of the old building, and which these Fathers were obliged to give in accordance with the stipulations of a legacy they had received. This new church cost several thousands. Besides

In the district of Frasso, already mentioned, I determined to erect another church or chapel besides the

the magnificent structure which the servant of God had erected in the hamlet of Santa Maria a Vico, in spite of all opposition, which was very great indeed, he also had the parish church of S. Agnese, a dependency of the collegiate church of Arienzo, restored and embellished, devoting to this great work all his wonted zeal. He, moreover, endeavored to induce the Duke of Maddaloni to enlarge a country chapel that existed in Taverna di Cancello, a dependency of the duke's, in order that he might erect it into a parish. In fact, the chapel was enlarged and the duke had a few rooms added for the intended pastor. But the parish priest of San Felice in the district of Arienzo, to whose church Taverna di Cancello belonged, would not give his consent to the proposed change, and the design of the servant of God could not be carried out. In order, therefore, not to be obliged to see those country people, in all a few hundreds, entirely deprived of spiritual assistance, on account of being so far away from their parish church, the servant of God engaged the chaplain whom the Duke of Maddaloni retained, to say Mass there on all days of obligation, to preach to the people on feasts, to hear confessions, and to instruct them in the mysteries of faith, allowing him for these services a sum of six ducats annually. The servant of God wished, also, to erect another parish in Crisci, a hamlet centrally situated among the other dependencies belonging to the district of Arienzo, and subject to the archpriest's church of that place. He could not endure the sight of the people being deprived of spiritual assistance which in any case could not be very great, as they could reach the church of the archpriest only with extreme difficulty, especially in winter, when through the large valleys rushed great floods of water. He obtained from the Canons of the collegiate church of Arienzo the ground required for this purpose, and at his own expense laid the foundation of the new edifice. He was unable, however, to continue the work, because the people being very poor could not contribute anything toward it, and alone he was himself quite unequal to the task. At the same time, he was attacked by a most serious illness that seemed mortal. To meet the exigencies of the case, therefore, in another way, he ordained some good and zealous priests belonging to these dependencies of Arienzo, to preach to the people, hear their confessions, and instruct them. He did not neglect to send thither every Sunday one of these priests to discharge such duties."

church of the archpriest to which the care of souls is attached. This new church is in a place more suited to the convenience of the faithful of the surrounding country, who are somewhat distant from the archpriest's church. But I could do this only after very great opposition on the part of the present incumbent, which I overcame, thanks be to God, without having recourse to the courts. This new church is affiliated to that of the archpriest, and has its own priest appointed by myself and removable at pleasure. The faithful can now attend the new church without any trouble even in bad weather, to hear the word of God and to receive the sacraments. I pursued this course of action, rather than that of erecting a new parish, because the reasons with regard to the great inconvenience or difficulty required by Pope Alexander III. *Ad audientiam*, and the Council of Trent (*cap. iv. sess. 21*), for dismemberment, did not seem to me fully and clearly to obtain in this case.

The number of souls in Sant' Agata and its suburbs is about 5,200; in Arienzo and its dependencies, more than 10,000; in Arpaia and Furchia, 1,600; in Airola and its dependencies, 6,200; in Frasso, 2,600; in Valle, 1,000; in Bagnoli, 250; in Dugenta, over 300; and in Cancello, about 200.

The secular clergy of the city and suburbs number about 80 priests; Arienzo with its suburbs has 120; Airola and its dependencies, about 80; Durazzano and its dependencies, about 40; and Valle, about 30. In the baronies, with the exception of Bagnoli, which has one priest recently ordained, there are no priests or ecclesiastics in Sacred Orders; there are, likewise, no clerics at present, and no prospect of receiving any increase from these quarters. The people there live the life of farmers.

With regard to other matters of less importance pertaining to the material conditon of the diocese and its churches, I may, I think, pass them over in silence, lest by too

minute an account of everything, I should weary the Sacred Congregation. What my predecessor has already sufficiently detailed in his report, still remains in the same condition.

The Formal Condition of the Diocese.

For the administration of justice, I retain my Vicar-General,[1] a foreigner, whom I appointed in the beginning of my office, and whose ability, good name, and moral character are worthy of the highest commendation. The fiscal procurator, the fiscal advocate and advocate of the poor, and the chancellor are members of the diocese. I have no officials at all for the cases pertaining to faith, because by a law of the realm passed by the Royal Legislature, in 1746, bishops are forbidden to proceed even according to the ordinary process, to summon the accused by virtue of the information received, and much less to pronounce sentence against him, unless they have previously remitted the case to the Royal Legislature and obtained its permission and approbation. This state of things makes it necessary for the bishops at present to employ other measures to preserve the purity and integrity of our holy faith. The office of the Inquisition, which is utterly detested throughout the kingdom, is entirely abolished.

As a body, the clergy, with a few exceptions, I have found thus far to be well disposed. Their manners, however, are not altogether what they ought to be, although now, by means of the spiritual exercises which the ecclesiastics are obliged to attend every year, and by paternal admonitions to which, when unavailing, I have not omitted to add gentle coercion, there is, thanks be to God, marked

1 This was the priest Don Giovanni Nicolò Rubini, of Teora, in the diocese of Conza, whom the saint held in so great esteem that he proposed him for the See of Sora, as was mentioned in *General Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 271.

improvement and greater piety among them, though I should wish to see more of both. For the most part, they are very deficient in the necessary knowledge of the sacred sciences, particularly of Moral Theology. There are, however, exceptions to this rule, not only at Sant' Agata, but also in the diocese. Some are, indeed, very learned men. To remedy this evil as best I could, I have established academies of Moral Theology for the instruction of those who lack the knowledge requisite, and I have placed at their head learned priests of my own selection.

Besides these academies, there are in the city and throughout the diocese weekly conferences on cases of conscience and rubrics, which are conducted with great exactness. All the clergy, even those advanced in years, attend them.

By the grace of God, my entire flock has been provided for during my term of office with missions given at frequent intervals in the city and throughout the diocese by the Fathers of my own Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, by the truly zealous missionaries of the Congregation of Father Pavone of Naples, and by the Pious Workers. The people are well instructed in the faith and assiduous in their attendance at church and the frequentation of the sacraments.

I animate the zeal of my parish priests in every way. As far as I can perceive, they are doing their duty well, expounding the Gospel to the people every Sunday and holyday of obligation, teaching the children, boys and girls, and the ignorant the rudiments of faith, administering the sacraments to the sick, according to the rite of holy Church, and fulfilling all the other obligations of their station to the best of their ability.

During Lent, the word of God is preached daily in the cathedral, the collegiate churches, and the churches of the archpriests; in country places, only on days of obligation.

The preachers in every case are chosen one year by the bishop and next year by the municipal authority, subject, however, to the approval of the bishop, and so on every alternate year. There is no exception in this regard save the cathedral, for which the bishop always selects the Lenten preacher. For the discharge of this duty those only are chosen who preach the word of God in a familiar, popular style, eschewing all vain show of rhetoric, and who aim only at preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Abuses, corrupt morals, and superstitious practices are found neither in the city nor throughout the diocese. If, perchance, it should happen that some are found addicted to these practices from ignorance or simplicity, remedies are at once applied and the evil removed.

I take great pleasure in mentioning a laudable custom that has of late been introduced throughout the diocese. I use the word *throughout* advisedly. It is this: every day at a fixed hour the bells are rung and the faithful repair to the principal church. When all have assembled and the requisite number of candles have been lighted on the altar, the door of the tabernacle is opened, and those present adore the Most Blessed Sacrament, reciting for this purpose some prayers or making pious meditations. I myself never omit to be present every day at this public adoration in the cathedral, thereby to give good example to my clergy and my people, and to foster in them this praiseworthy custom of visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament, from which I experience and hope for the greatest fruit.

Since my coming, the practice of making mental prayer during the early Masses, and the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, particularly on Saturdays, have been everywhere propagated. Every Saturday, also, in order to increase the devotion of the faithful toward the Mother of God, a sermon is preached in her honor by some pious and learned priest whom I myself select.

Report of the Work Performed.

The principal duty of the episcopal office, frequently to preach to the clergy and people, exhorting, reproving, and correcting them in all patience, I discharge in person, and, thanks be to God, not without good results. I am accustomed, also, every Saturday, when not prevented by ill health, to preach in honor of the Blessed Virgin, in order to foster and increase the spirit of fervor in the hearts of the faithful.

Every year in company with the Vicar-General I conduct the Canonical Visitation of one-half of the diocese; and in accordance with the desire of the Council of Trent, I repeat the same before the expiration of two years. To aid me in the discharge of my duty I am careful to summon to my assistance the members of my own Congregation, the Missionary Priests of the Most Holy Redeemer. These Fathers have done much to advance the spiritual welfare of the people by frequent missions in the city, and more especially throughout the diocese where greater docility in matters of instruction is more usually found.

In the city and in almost every part of the diocese exist sodalities of the Most Blessed Sacrament, from whose revenues everything necessary for the adornment of the altars and the becoming administration of the sacraments is provided. It is not customary, however, nor is it prescribed by their rules that the members of the sodalities accompany the Blessed Sacrament when carried to the sick, wearing any particular dress; for these societies are composed chiefly of country people and laborers, who cannot always be on hand when the holy Viaticum is borne to the sick during the day. I have imposed the obligation to accompany the Blessed Sacrament in such cases upon the clerics.

There are no sodalities of Christian doctrine. It would be extremely difficult to establish them here. The vigilance

and care of the parish priests and of some of the clerics who reside outside the seminary until such time as they may be received, supply all that is necessary in this regard. Indeed, the clerics devote themselves especially to this work.

I do not neglect to appoint throughout the diocese exemplary priests, who are more advanced in years and learning, to give familiar explanations of the Christian doctrine on days of obligation to the boys and girls separately in churches assigned to them, and to instruct them in the manner of making mental prayer and performing other exercises of devotion in honor of the Passion of our Lord.

I have, also, been careful frequently to administer the sacrament of Confirmation during the Canonical Visitations that I have made in the city and the diocese. And when not prevented by my health, which has been very poor for some time past, I officiate pontifically at the times prescribed, and perform the other functions of my episcopal office. I have not been absent from my diocese at all, and am quite content not to take up my residence in the future outside its limits.

At times, I have been present in choir at the cathedral and the collegiate churches, to give good example to the Canons, and to incite them to fervor in the devout recitation of the divine Office. Against public scandals, should any arise, I proceed first with admonition and exhortation; if contumacy is then added to crime, I pronunce the anathema.

The temporal administration of only a few pious places is in the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities. Of these institutions, I have now and then made investigations with regard to the general management, leaving the care and examination of details, as is the custom here, to some exemplary priest of good judgment.

The records containing the accounts of obligations to say Mass and the fulfilment thereof, are subjected every year to

the inspection of the Vicar-General, who accompanies me on the Visitation. The tablets containing the record of foundation Masses, duly drawn up and cared for, are in use throughout the diocese.

The principal duty of the episcopal office and the most important of all its cares, is the conferring of Holy Orders. I therefore subject all the candidates to an examination as to their knowledge of the sacred sciences. This examination takes place before myself and several learned men whom I call to my aid. I institute, also, a strict investigation into their manner of life, in order to find out in so far as possible for me the most wretched of the miserable, what their conduct is. Letters of commendation and other methods of seeking influence I utterly ignore, thanks be to God!

Daily I offer up the holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the flock confided to my care, and publicly and privately assist with money and food, in proportion to the episcopal revenues, the poor, particularly the sick, those whose virtue is in peril, and fallen women, that may be kept from sin.

I endeavor to execute faithfully the decree of the holy Council of Trent in regard to promoting to Sacred Orders under the title of their patrimony only such as are really necessary and useful for the service of the Church; also, the admonitions of the Sacred Congregation regarding the observance of the above-mentioned decree of the Council, and the other salutary ordinances of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops requiring that, before promotion, and especially to Sacred Orders, the spiritual exercises should be made; finally, the Bull of Pope Innocent XII. beginning *Speculatores.*

I know full well that the celebration of a diocesan synod holds an important place among the duties of the bishop, as it is the most suitable and efficacious means of stimulating ecclesiastical discipline, eradicating vice, removing

abuses, reforming manners, and establishing such other measures as are conducive to the welfare of the entire flock. However, on account of the circumstances in which we are situated at present, the bishops cannot enact and publish synodal statutes, and for this reason I have refrained from holding any synod. I have, nevertheless, provided for the needs of the diocese in another way. Following the example of other very worthy and zealous prelates, I have issued a series of notifications, or decrees, bearing upon the observance of ecclesiastical discipline.

I have nothing to present to the Sacred Congregation in the shape of petition in favor of the diocese, nor is there anything that I can remember, which should be brought to the notice of that body. If, however, on account of the unsettled condition of the times anything should happen that would require the intervention of the Sacred Congregation, I shall not hesitate, for the welfare of good order, humbly to submit it to their consideration.

What I have said, is about all that I think necessary to lay before the Sacred Congregation. If in my report there is anything that calls for animadversion, I am prepared most humbly to receive their corrections, and bow my head with respectful submission.

Kissing the hem of the Sacred Purple, I am

Your most humble, devoted, and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti.

As a complement of this report we take the liberty to insert the response of the Sacred Congregation.

To his Lordship, the Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti.

Very pleasing, indeed, to the Fathers of the Sacred Congregation was the report of your Lordship, in which you informed them of the condition of your diocese, and the manner in which you discharge the duties of your episcopal

office. They rejoice still more to learn that upon both these points they have every reason to be pleased and to congratulate your Lordship. For in all that has been done, what is there that has not been devised and executed in the best manner, thanks to your care and diligence? What is there in the whole range of your most responsible position that your solicitude, devotedness, and attention do not embrace? To pass over other points which, though seemingly of only ordinary worth, are deserving of great commendation on account of their utility, that which more than all fills the Fathers with esteem for your Lordship, is the fact, that with great zeal and admirable fortitude in the face of innumerable difficulties, you have increased the number of the watch-towers and outposts of the pastor, parochial churches, namely, in accordance with the needs of your people. You have undertaken to build from the very foundation a new seminary of more ample and beautiful proportions in the vicinity of the episcopal palace, and you exercise the greatest vigilance in the education of the seminarists particularly in ecclesiastical knowledge, so that the best possible selection may be made of those who are to be promoted to the service of the Church and the guidance of souls.

You have, also, put a finishing hand to the building destined for a convent of nuns, and taken measures that nothing should be wanting to the perpetuity of this work when completed. The Fathers most earnestly hope that the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars will acknowledge the justness of your petition in this regard.

Admirable, too, has been your provision for the education of the clergy in the departements of ecclesiastical discipline and sacred science by the introduction of academies of Moral Theology distinct from the frequent conferences on cases of conscience and rubrics. In conducting the Canonical Visitation, likewise, you are accustomed to prepare and secure your progress through the diocese by sending zealous missionaries to all parts, who, by preaching the word of God, the doctrines of our holy faith, and other pious means of winning souls, arouse and encourage the people, who attend

their sermons in crowds, to flee from sin, and to practise virtue. But it is unnecessary further to recount the inventions of your pastoral zeal and industry, by which you foster divine worship, the practice of piety and charity, and in every way provide for the welfare of the flock entrusted to you, by example, admonition, exhortation, correction, tireless watchfulness, and devotedness.

As, by the grace of God, your Lordship sees these your labors perfected and, as a general rule, crowned with most flattering success, you should be extremely thankful to the Almighty. You should desire and work for nothing more strenuously than the performance of those labors which tend to his glory and which are found chiefly in looking after the salvation of souls. And here, though the Fathers think it unnecessary to incite thereunto one that is laboring so manfully and possessed of virtue like yours, they cannot omit, in accordance with their office, to exhort you most earnestly to undertake those matters which, you say, can be done only with extreme difficulty, if at all.

Remember, therefore, that the Sacred Congregation places before you as the most desirable of all the praise that you can attain, the celebration of a diocesan synod. At this time, there is nothing more befitting your pastoral office, nothing more beneficial to your clergy and people, nothing more acceptable and pleasing to the Sacred Congregation, nothing that will reflect upon yourself more glory than this. To this end, difficult though it be, as your Lordship writes, and hemmed in though you be by obstacles innumerable, you should direct all your energies, your thoughts, your prudence, and your diligence, firmly relying on that divine assistance which you have already experienced in other matters, and of which there are, indeed, striking examples in this regard. You will, therefore, do all that lies in your power to bring about this desirable result, and placing unbounded confidence in the help of the Most High, leave the issue, whatever it may be, entirely to the good pleasure of the divine will.

This high hope in you which the Fathers have formed

from the excellence of what your Lordship has done, they trust you will not frustrate or suffer to perish; but, on the contrary, that you will increase in a still greater degree the unanimity with which they vie to sound your praises.

As I myself wish to add my voice to theirs, I take this occasion of doing so, and I assure your Lordship that you may count upon my good-will whenever such cooperation may be necessary.

Given at Rome, August 20, 1765.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 356.

To the Rural Deans.

He forbids the examination in Christian doctrine to take place outside the church, and complains that they have concealed from him the existence of an abuse to the contrary.

Arienzo, March 16, 1766.

Very Reverend and Excellent Sirs: To our intense grief, and with no little surprise we have recently learned that, in your districts, the children of both sexes go for examination in the rudiments of faith to the residences of the priests and not to the respective churches.

You can readily imagine the irregularities that may occur in cases of this kind without our explaining them in detail. We have been greatly displeased with your remissness in not informing us of this condition of affairs. We positively do not want any women to go to the house of the priest for examination, and you will make this our desire known to all, that this detestable abuse may be abolished. We pray you not to be so tardy for the future in

letting us know whatever irregularities occur, and to be more attentive to the welfare of your several charges.

Blessing you, we remain

Your most devoted servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After an old copy.

LETTER 357.

To the Archpriest and Parish Priests of Arienzo.

He commands the observance of the order with regard to the late Mass on festivals.—Punishment for disobedience.

[ARIENZO, June 10, 1767.]

Alfonso Maria de Liguori, by the grace of God and the Holy See, Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti and Suessuta, Baron of Bagnoli, and Rector Major of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

To our great sorrow we have learned during our present Visitation of this part of our diocese that the orders which we published upon a former occasion with regard to the celebration of the late Mass on festivals, are not observed either in the collegiate church or in the different parish churches; but that this Mass is said two hours before mid-day, and sometimes even earlier. In this way, the purpose of our ordinance is frustrated, which was to afford to the country people and those who happened to be passing through on their journey an opportunity of hearing holy Mass on those days.

In order to apply a prompt and lasting remedy to such an abuse, we hereby command the archpriest and all the parish priests of this district to see that, from the receipt of

this edict, the late Mass in question be celebrated on the appointed days in the collegiate church and in the respective parochial churches, and that it be not commenced earlier than one hour before noon, so that everyone may be enabled to comply with his obligation. We desire to have this regulation carried out most punctually under penalty of two pounds of wax for pious uses, to be exacted without hesitation from the archpriest and the parish priests whose duty it is to appoint the priest for this Mass, as well as from the priest so designated in the event of disobedience, and other punishments at our good pleasure.

That the present ordinance, or rather confirmation of previous ordinances, may be duly observed, and may be brought to the knowledge of all, and no one be able to plead ignorance thereof, we desire the archpriest and the parish priests to take a copy of it which they shall hang up in their respective sacristies, and return the original to us, stating at the same time that they have executed our commands.

ARIENZO, from the episcopal palace, during the Canonical Visitation, June 10, 1767.

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 358.

To Don Pasquale Mauro, Rural Dean of Moiano.

He establishes punishments for the removal of certain abuses which he enumerates.

[AIROLA, June 27, 1767.]

Very Reverend Sir: We have been informed, to our great grief, that in the hamlet of Moiano, which belongs to

the city of Airola, some ecclesiastics are present in the parochial and other churches at solemn anniversaries, votive Masses, obsequies, and the celebration of other sacred services in civilian attire and without surplice. Others have made bold to go about even without the clerical collar, and with a little knitted cap on their heads and a handkerchief about their necks; others, to play in public resorts; others have taken liberty to violate the regulation requiring black clothes; and some have gone so far as to stand in front of the portals of the parish or other churches, to watch those who enter or leave, and even to pass remarks upon them. Others, finally, absent themselves from the processions prescribed by the ritual in the city of Airola, which they are obliged to attend; or, when they do attend, they take the liberty to appear in secular attire and mingle with the people,—a thing they do, also, when they take part in the processions at Moiano. Some too, we learn, have ventured to go about in the morning before Mass without the soutane, and even at holy Mass wear the sleeveless cassock, in direct violation of the regulations heretofore made by us. All these matters are unbecoming, quite contrary to the ecclesiastical character, and cause great surprise and scandal to the faithful.

Still as we desire to be lenient with these persons, we forbear proceeding against them this time with the rigor which they have richly deserved by such conduct. We warn them, however, be they priests, or ecclesiastics in Sacred Orders, or simple clerics, not to be guilty of acts so unbecoming for the future. Let each one of them while attending at church on anniversaries, solemn votive Masses, funerals, or other sacred functions, wear the soutane with sleeves during the six months prescribed in our *Notification*,[1] as also the surplice. Let them assist with due respect in the choir or other place destined for the singing, so that

[1] *Notification VI.*, see page 263.

they may fulfil their obligation properly. Any violation of these ordinances shall be punished with forfeiture of their share of the distribution, which sum will be given to the others; and this penalty shall be inflicted without human respect in every case of disobedience, by the parish priest or the rural dean of Moiano. Furthermore, we charge both these persons to report to us for prompt treatment all refractoriness on the part of any of the ecclesiastics.

Moreover, no ecclesiastic shall dare leave the house without the clerical collar, under pain of one month's imprisonment, much less with a little knitted cap on the head or a handkerchief about the neck; and no one shall assume clothes of any other color than black, or play at any game of chance in public resorts. Neither shall any of them stand before the church, be it the parish church or another, at a time when the faithful are entering either to assist at Mass, or other sacred service, or for the visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament in the evening, or at any other time that people come to say prayers or perform devotions. In all these cases, the same punishment as above will be inflicted without fail upon everyone that ventures to transgress these regulations.

Under the same penalty, one month's imprisonment, all ecclesiastics shall be obliged to attend in surplice the processions prescribed by the ritual in the city of Airola; and let them not attempt in future to appear in secular dress and go about among the people as they have hitherto done. They shall behave in the same manner, also, whenever they take part in the processions at Moiano.

Finally, in confirmation of preceding ordinances issued by us with regard to the use of the long soutane, every ecclesiastic shall be obliged to wear the cassock during the forenoon from the first of May till the first of November of each year. During this period no one shall venture to appear in the church in civilian attire, or to wear the

sleeveless cassock while celebrating holy Mass, as this is allowed only during the other part of the year. The punishment for a violation of this regulation will be one month's imprisonment. We also recommend to all our priests devout preparation before holy Mass and a suitable thanksgiving after it; for in this respect, many are somewhat negligent.

That what we have herein ordained may meet with ready and exact obedience, and that no one may be able to plead ignorance in extenuation of his fault, we confide these presents to you, Very Reverend Sir, to make them public. For this purpose, you will assemble the ecclesiastics in the sacristy of the parish church and read these ordinances to them. A copy of these regulations shall, also, be made and preserved by you, and once a month, when the ecclesiastics convene for the conference on moral cases, you will read them. The original shall be returned to us with the report that our order has been complied with.

Given from our residence at AIROLA, during the Canonical Visitation, June 27, 1767.

Your most devoted servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 359.

To the Rural Deans of the Diocese.

Ordinances respecting processions.—Penalties for the disobedient.

SANT' AGATA DE' GOTI, June 30, 1767.

Our experience in the course of the government of the diocese has proved to us that the holding of processions

during the afternoon, as is customary in some places, is usually accompanied with abuses that give rise to much surprise, scandal, and notable injury to souls, as instead of deriving from them spiritual profit, the participants only bring about their own ruin. In order, therefore, to avoid every occasion of evil that might spring from such a source, and that these processions may turn to the advantage of the faithful and the glory of God, we ordain that henceforward they shall take place in our cathedral and all other places of our diocese, in the morning, whether prescribed by the ritual, or merely votive, or held for some other reason. We absolutely forbid all processions during the afternoon.

To this end, we enjoin upon all the archpriests and parish priests to act in accordance with this order, under penalty of one month's imprisonment in the event of disobedience. This punishment will be incurred, likewise, by ecclesiastics who take part in such processions after the publication of this notice. His Majesty, the King, to do away with similar abuses, has by a royal rescript decreed the same punishment against them at Naples.

In order, therefore, that this ordinance may come to the knowledge of all, we desire you, to make it known to all the archpriests, parish priests, and ecclesiastics. For this purpose, you will read it to them in the place where they usually convene for the conferences on cases of conscience. You will, also, make copies of it, which you will keep at hand, and return the original to us with the information that our desire has been complied with.

Imparting to you all our pastoral benediction,

Your most devoted servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 360.

To the Rural Dean of Frasso.

He inculcates the exact observance of some ordinances already published, and charges him in conscience to denounce transgressors.

Episcopal Palace, SANT' AGATA DE' GOTI, July 11, 1767.

We have learned that, in the district of Frasso, the ordinances issued by us in regard to the celebration of the late Mass on festivals at the time appointed, are not observed; but that this Mass is said long before mid-day. The result is, that the end proposed in our ordinances, namely, to give the country-people and those who happen to be passing through on their journey an opportunity to hear holy Mass on these days, has been frustrated. To apply a prompt and effectual remedy to this evil, we hereby command the archpriest and the prefect of the collegiate chapter to see that, from the receipt of the present notice, this Mass on festivals be celebrated at the specified time, in other words, to see that it does not begin earlier than one hour before mid-day, so that everyone may have an opportunity of fulfilling his obligation. We furthermore desire this regulation to be scrupulously observed. In case of disobedience, a penalty of two pounds of wax for pious uses shall be inflicted without hesitation as well upon the archpriest whose duty it is to appoint the priest to say this Mass, as upon the priest so designated, with other punishments at our good pleasure.

We have, also, been informed, to our great sorrow, that some ecclesiastics of your district have taken the liberty to go about frequently in their respective localities in attire other than black; others during the period prescribed by us in previous ordinances, namely, from the first of May to the first of November, when they are required to wear the

soutane in the forenoon, have ventured to appear in secular dress, and even at holy Mass to wear the sleeveless cassock; some, too, have taken part in games played in public and in places of resort in the said district, to the great scandal of the people.

These and similar abuses we desire to remedy also. We enjoin, therefore, that, from the publication of this notice, no ecclesiastic shall attempt to wear any color save black when going about at home, excepting only when he is obliged to go into the country or is traveling in a strange place. In these cases, clothing of any subdued color may be worn during the journey. Likewise, during the six months already specified, every ecclesiastic shall wear the long, buttoned cassock in the forenoon, and shall use the same while saying holy Mass or attending any other sacred service. No one shall during this time make use of the sleeveless soutane. That may be worn only during the other six months, on account of the severity of the season in those parts of the diocese.

We, moreover, command that henceforward no ecclesiastic shall venture to play at any game whatever in public and in places in which people are wont to assemble. It is allowed them to play only in the house of respectable persons, provided always that the games are in themselves not forbidden, and are indulged in only by way of pastime and with moderation. These prescriptions and regulations shall be faithfully observed by all ecclesiastics under a penalty of one month's imprisonment to be inflicted on the disobedient. That these orders may be so observed, we charge you, to be most conscientious in denouncing to us those who do not obey them. Should you through negligence or human respect fail to discharge this duty, you shall be condemned to undergo yourself the same punishment of one month's imprisonment.

By way of appendix to what has been decreed in the

foregoing, we add that for the future all processions that are to be held in this district during the year, whether prescribed by the ritual, or merely votive, or for other special reason, shall take place only in the morning. We expressly forbid the archpriest and the Canons to permit them in the afternoon, as we also forbid all ecclesiastics to take part in them under the same punishment as was laid down above. Our object in making this regulation is to prevent the abuses that usually accompany these processions in the afternoon. For the same reason, namely, to do away with these irregularities, his Majesty has, by a royal rescript, forbidden them in Naples.

That these ordinances may become known to all concerned, and that no one may be able to plead ignorance of them, we have determined to forward these presents to you, with the request, that you publish them to all, so that every particular may be dutifully observed. You will, also, make a copy of them to be kept near at hand, and read them to the ecclesiastics at least three times a year in the place in which they are wont to convene for the conferences on moral cases.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 361.

To the Clergy of the Diocese.

Various regulations of ecclesiastical discipline summarized and enjoined by the saint.

[1768.]

Ecclesiastics shall not appear abroad either in populated districts or in country places without the clerical habit and collar.

They shall not go into the church without the cassock, under pain of suspension for those in Sacred Orders. The cassock in question shall be long and have sleeves.

No ecclesiastic shall take part in or be a spectator at games either at home or in public places.

No ecclesiastic shall leave the house one hour after nightfall without an urgent necessity and without a companion and a lantern.

Ecclesiastics shall not appear before a secular tribunal under any pretext, be it of necessity or of temporal interests.

When the governor appears, every ecclesiastic shall rise, doff his cap, and salute him as is required by his rank and the politeness becoming the priestly character.

No ecclesiastic shall let it be said of him that he is contentious either in church or in public places.

Should it happen that an ecclesiastic is discovered in some offence and the news reach us through other channels than the rural dean, the latter, as well as the delinquent, shall be punished, and this with a severity and rigor heretofore not exercised. It is the ecclesiastics that preserve or destroy the good name of the bishop and the country, and his Majesty can very easily find out all the details.

The ecclesiastics shall not enter into any intimacy, or quarrel with the subaltern officers of the court, be they notaries, chancellors, copyists, commissioners, or other officials. When they meet them or have to transact any business, let them always be polite and civil, so as to avoid all disagreeable consequences.

Every Wednesday, the conference on cases of conscience or rubrics or ceremonial shall be held.

Every Sunday without exception the instruction in Christian doctrine shall be given. It shall be preceded by a procession with the cross through the village or district in charge of each pastor.

Besides those who, having the care of souls, are obliged to be present on ordinary days, to satisfy the wants of the

faithful, the other confessors shall be in attendance in the church on feast days.

Holy Mass shall be celebrated with becoming gravity and devotion. The sacred vestments should be suitable, the churches and the altars neat and clean, and the Masses said at the hours most convenient for the faithful.

No ecclesiastic shall go hunting on forbidden ground where such places exist.

Ecclesiastics shall not be seen conversing with women either at home or abroad, especially with such as are of suspicious character.

He who transgresses these regulations will incur not only the punishment deserved, but, likewise, the displeasure of his Lordship.

After an old copy.

LETTER 362.

To the Sacred Congregation of the Council.

Second report of the saint on the condition of his diocese.

SANT' AGATA DE' GOTI, April 28, 1768.

I should, indeed, wish to be able to lay before your Eminences with all humility the account of my stewardship as bishop of this diocese, and visit in person the sacred tomb of the Apostles, according to the prescription of the Constitution of Pope Sixtus V., an obligation that is now at hand for the sixty-first triennium. But numerous cares, and particularly my advanced age and continual infirmity, render this utterly impossible. Relying, therefore, on the extreme kindness of the Sacred Congregation, I venture to hope that your Eminences will receive my messenger favorably, and admit my just excuse.

Three years have nearly elapsed since I pointed out to your Eminences with sufficient minuteness the material and

spiritual condition of my church and diocese, in my first report humbly presented to the Sacred Congregation. Little, therefore, remains to be said on either subject.

There is now at Sant' Agata a new convent under the title of Our Lady of Constantinople in which the nuns live according to the Rule of the Most Holy Redeemer. This convent was established two years ago with the permission of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, who also consented that it should be endowed by the annexation of the revenues of some pious foundations, as its own income was not sufficient to meet all its wants. Besides the three nuns who were transferred from the convent at Scala to this new house to make the beginning, it contains at present twelve young girls, some of whom are novices, and the rest scholars. Three of the novices are on the eve of making their profession. The life of these nuns, which is, indeed, religious and marked by the strict observance of their Rule, is a source of edification to the entire population. The enclosure of the convent is inviolably observed. The site which this excellent convent now occupies was formerly a conservatory of Sisters under the same title, but which did not enjoy the enclosure, because the building was not entirely finished, being completed only during my term of office. It now possesses all the necessary living and working-rooms suitably arranged for a number of inmates. The people of Sant' Agata looked forward with intense expectation to the completion of this work, and now that it is finished, though not without considerable labor through which God has assisted us, they regard it with the greatest satisfaction.

I am especially solicitous to complete the old seminary, which was begun almost from the foundation four years ago, with a view of making it more commodious and better suited to the needs of the young men. But on account of the heavy expenses already incurred in its construction, I

was obliged to suspend operations during the past year till some more favorable time, so as not to burden the new building too heavily with debt. With the help of God, however, I firmly trust I shall soon be able once more to resume so praiseworthy a work as will be this new seminary, and thus provide for the best means of training our young men in learning and piety. Meanwhile, the seminarists reside in some houses belonging to the episcopal palace which have been fitted up as a seminary, and are entirely separated from the residence and the bishop's household.

The beauty and splendor of the churches are diligently cared for throughout the diocese. In some of the older churches greater beauty of form and better adornment are being introduced. Among these, the parochial church of S. Agnese in the district of Arienzo, now complete in every detail, holds an important position. But when the work upon it is finished, the palm will belong to another parish church in the same district, that of S. Nicola the Great. This church is very large and grand, and I am sparing no pains upon its renovation.

A lofty campanile, now in the course of erection, is being added to the church of the Annunziata in the city of Airola. It is a work altogether in keeping with the beauty of the church itself.

The parish of S. Giovanni Battista, situated in Bucciano, a hamlet of the above-mentioned city of Airola, has grown to such an extent as to comprise within its jurisdiction two other distant country-places. On account of the distance and the miserable condition of the roads, particularly in winter, and still more during the rainy season, when the torrents render the roads impassable, the faithful of these places could not attend their parish church either to hear the word of God or to receive the sacraments. For the same reasons, the parish priest was unable to help them in case of spiritual need. Now as it might easily happen, as

it has in the past, that some of the parishioners would be left destitute of spiritual assistance in their last moments and depart this life without the comfort of the last rites of the Church, it seemed necessary, to appoint for the church of S. Giovanni Battista, already existing in one of the hamlets, another priest to act as curate. This priest should be examined by the Bishop of Sant' Agata, and approved by him for the care of souls. He should, also, be removable at the bishop's good pleasure. He should receive from the revenues of the parish a suitable salary amounting to fifty ducats, Neapolitan currency, payable annually, without infringing upon the salary already paid to the present parish priest of S. Giovanni. He should be required to take up his residence in the distant hamlets above-mentioned, to administer the sacraments to the faithful there, explain to them the Gospel on Sundays, instruct them in the rudiments of faith, and render them spiritual assistance in their last moments. In response, therefore, to a petition from these people, and observing the forms required by law, I resolved to carry out this necessary arrangement during the vacancy caused by the death of the parish priest of S. Giovanni in a month reserved to the appointment of the Holy See. I published this decree and appointed the day for the *concursus*, expressly stipulating that he who should be appointed to the vacant pastorate by the authority of the Holy See, should be solemnly bound to pay annually to the aforesaid curate the sum of fifty ducats as suitable salary; not more than this sum being required, because the contributions of the faithful already afforded a sufficient amount to guarantee the repairs and protection of the things belonging to the church now existing in said hamlet. In the *concursus*, the synodal examiners approved Don Pasquale Diodato, a priest whom I, also, thought most capable. He was appointed to the vacant pastorate by the authority of the Holy See, and the above-named condition was incorporated in

the Bull of the Sovereign Pontiff. By virtue of these tenors, Don Pasquale was installed in his new office in February, and the curate appointed at the same time. The latter now resides in his own church, and fulfils all the duties of his position. Thus have I endeavored, to the best of my power in the Lord, to discharge my pastoral duty, and the measure has been a source of the greatest joy to these poor people.

I attend to the care of souls with all solicitude according as God permits me with my infirm health. Every year, my Vicar-General and myself make the Visitation of the diocese, establishing such regulations with regard to the clergy as are in conformity with ecclesiastical discipline, and eradicating the vices that are usually met among the people.

In promoting candidates to Holy Orders, I scrupulously avoid undue haste. Indeed, ignoring altogether the petitions of very many who present themselves, I generally ordain only those of my own seminary, and that only after an examination in my presence, and diligent inquiry as to their conduct.

When not prevented by the infirmity under which I have been laboring so long, I do not neglect to break the bread of life to my flock in person. I call to my aid, also, the missionaries of my own Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer and other laborers, to arouse my people to greater fervor and love of God.

I endeavor frequently to spur on my parish priests, both by word and example, to become more and more diligent in the discharge of the graver duties of their station; and, in fact, the children come from all sides to the instruction in Christian doctrine. The grown people, also, are provided for during the Paschal season, and the ignorant are not permitted to receive the Easter Communion before they have attended instruction.

Finally, should public scandals arise, I meet them, first, with admonition and exhortation; if they continue, and the offenders grow contumacious, I coerce them with anathema.

These, Most Eminent Fathers, are the principal points on which I make my report. Should there be anything reprehensible in what has been done, I shall most willingly receive your reprimands.

Kissing the hem of the Sacred Purple, I am

Your most humble, devoted, and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti.

To this, the Sacred Congregation returned the following response:

To his Lordship, the Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti.

July 27, 1768.

"The Fathers of the Sacred Congregation of the Council of Trent have read with the greatest pleasure the report of your Lordship. Although they expected to learn about those matters which pertain to the material and spiritual condition of your diocese, which items you omitted, as you said, because of the minute description contained in the previous report, they have seen with sufficient clearness in what your Lordship did transmit, your great industry and solicitude in fulfilling the principal duties of your episcopal office. The Fathers were pleased to learn that the convent of Our Lady of Constantinople is finished, and that the restoration and embellishment of other sacred edifices are still going on under your direction, while in others they have been already completed. Above all, they earnestly hope that you will soon be able to inform them that the seminary, begun four years ago, is finished. In this most useful and necessary work, you will have erected a mighty stronghold whence to diffuse sound doctrine and morality throughout the diocese. In deciding to appoint a curate to the parish church of San

Giovanni Battista in the hamlet of Bucciano, whose duty it should be to administer the sacraments and explain the word of God in places remote from the parochial church, you have most admirably provided for the welfare of souls, and given to the Sacred Congregation in this, as in all the other ministrations of your office, a proof of your ability and fidelity. The Fathers clearly perceive that you diligently consult the welfare of your diocese and are prompt in advancing it, not less by your own untiring zeal than by the continual efforts of your fellow-laborers in the Lord's vineyard, whom you encourage by your own bright example. Your Lordship may, therefore, rest assured that the Sacred Congregation entertains a very high opinion of you, an opinion which you will still further increase if you crown your labors in behalf of the diocese by the celebration of a diocesan synod.

"With the expression of my own sincere respect and affection for your Lordship, I am, etc."

After an old copy.

LETTER 363.

To his Majesty, Ferdinand IV., King of Naples.

He represents to him the evil of duelling and the condemnations passed upon it by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. He beseeches him to revive the civil enactments against it, especially in the case of soldiers, among whom it most frequently occurs.

[1768?]

Sire: Alfonso Maria de Liguori, Bishop of Sant' Agata, prompted by the desire to repair the dishonor done Almighty God and the ruin of innumerable souls, humbly places at the feet of your Majesty the following petition, and asks your Majesty to give it consideration; then to act as may seem best to your Majesty, in order to put an end

to the great evil of duelling, which of late years has become so common in the city of Naples, as well as throughout the kingdom.

Your Majesty already knows how detestable this crime of duelling is on account of its serious consequences, among which I might especially mention feuds between families and disturbances in the community.

Duelling is an invention of the devil to lead men to decide questions of controversy by the death of the combatants, after the manner of the heathens, among whom the spirit of revenge largely obtained. It is for this reason, that duels have been condemned by all laws, human and divine. In the Council of Valencia, in 855, excommunication was decreed against all who fought duels, and the right of Christian burial was denied to him who fell in them. This decree was afterward confirmed by the Sovereign Pontiffs and also by the Council of Trent, which says (*sess. xxv. de Ref. cap. 19*): "The detestable practice of duelling, which has been introduced at the instigation of the devil that in the bloody death of the body he may secure the ruin of the soul, should be obliterated from the entire Christian world." And Pope Clement VIII., in 1592, declared in the Bull *Illius vices* that the condemnation of duelling was to be understood as applying, also, to private duels fought without seconds, and to the soldiers and officers who permitted them.

In like manner, civil rulers have condemned duelling, as may be seen in *L. unica cod. de gladiator.*, and in the laws of Spain, *P. iii. tit. 14, l. 8.* The monarchs of France in particular, the glorious ancestors of your Majesty, prohibited it with extreme rigor. Louis XIII. forbade duels under the penalty of loss of rank, dignities, and possessions, and declared that every duellist should be branded with disgrace. Louis XIV. forbade them under penalty of death, and with such severity did he execute this law that

he merited the glory of driving the spirit of duelling out of France.

In the kingdom of Naples, too, duelling was formerly forbidden by the Emperor Frederick, as we learn from the constitutions of that monarch. Later on, the kings of Naples in several decrees condemned duels with great severity. On January 2, 1540, as may be seen in vol. i. page 250, of the first *Pragmatica*, duelling was prohibited under pain of death to those who gave the challenge, even though the combat did not actually take place, and also to those who, accepting the challenge, killed their opponent. Like punishment was meted out, also, upon the seconds and witnesses of duels, and it was furthermore declared that, if the party challenged refused to accept, the refusal was to his honor and not to his disgrace. On May 9, 1662, as we see in the third *Pragmatica*, page 251, it was decreed that duellists, for the first offence, should be punished with exile for ten years, degraded from their rank, and excluded from all offices and dignities. For a second offence the penalty was death.

For a long time this accursed practice has not been in vogue in Naples; but within the last few years, it is an ascertained fact that duels have been fought by several persons, particularly among the soldiery, and that they resulted in the unfortunate death of one of the principals.

In Germany, many are of the erroneous opinion that a soldier when challenged to a duel, may be allowed to accept it, in order not to forfeit his honor and his position. But this most pernicious doctrine was very justly condemned in 1752, by Benedict XIV. in the Bull *Detestabilem;* for it ought not to be considered dishonorable to a soldier of the realm, especially since he is a Christian, to refuse to commit such a crime in disobedience to his God and to his king who has forbidden it.

Sire, new glory will be added to your Majesty's present

renown, if you banish from the kingdom this abominable pest of duelling, which destroys at once the souls and the bodies of your subjects. I, therefore, most humbly entreat your Majesty to revive the laws already enacted by your royal predecessors, and to have them executed rigorously against all, according to the punishment laid down, but particularly against the soldiers among whom these duels are most frequent. I furthermore entreat your Majesty to declare expressly that those who do not accept challenges, shall be retained in their respective stations and in the possession of their honors, while, on the contrary, those who send the challenge, as well as those who accept it, shall be branded with public ignominy as violators of your royal decrees.

Such a declaration would be most advantageous precisely at this time, when your Majesty has organized the new brigade composed of so many spirited young fellows, among whom, as they are in the flower of youth and the ardor of their prime, such challenges might easily arise on account of the disputes that usually occur among them. Your Majesty's soldiers should sacrifice their blood and their lives not in support of a false point of honor, but rather in defence of our holy faith, and the life and realm of their king.

Knowing your Majesty's earnest zeal, your suppliant hopes that his humble petition will not be disregarded, and he will pray God to bless, etc.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 364.

To the Canons and Chaplains of the Cathedral.

Various points of choral discipline.

Episcopal Palace, ARIENZO, December 29, 1770.

Alfonso Maria de Liguori, by the grace of God and the Holy See, Bishop of Sant' Agata and Suessula, Baron of Bagnoli, and Rector Major of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

From the beginning of our administration we have endeavored to correct the various disorders that we found both in regard to the choral discipline of our cathedral and the decency of attire which our capitulars, as well as the other ecclesiastics, should practise. To this end, we have issued several *Notifications*. We have learned with bitter grief that some do not observe these regulations, and that what we have ordained in our *Notifications* with regard to such matters is, in part, not complied with. We, therefore, command all the capitulars, as also the chaplains of our cathedral, to observe from the publication of these presents the following points:

I. In the recitation of the divine Office, they shall make the prescribed pause at the asterisk, and one side of the choir shall not begin until the other has finished; for we have been informed that the Office is recited too hurriedly. We charge the prefects of the choir in conscience to be exact in requiring the observance of this regulation.

II. The Canons and chaplains shall not take the liberty to speak in the choir during the time of divine Office or of a Mass that is sung, except when something is to be said in reference to the rubrics or the good order of the choir at any ceremony at which the chapter is present. Nor shall they at such times read letters or leave the choir without necessity. If they do, we charge those whose duty it is, to

fine them in proportion to their absence, and should these officers neglect to do so, they shall bear in mind that they fail in conscience.

III. We have learned that some of the Canons leave their places in the choir and seat themselves among the chaplains, thereby causing disorder. Under the same penalty as that mentioned in the preceding number, we forbid this abuse; and those whose duty it is to note such matters, are bound in conscience to do so.

IV. We have been informed that some of the Canons also, instead of repairing to the choir when the Office is about to begin, remain in the sacristy in order to be able to go to celebrate Mass after a little delay; and so dilatory are they at times that, having said holy Mass, they enter the choir only after Lauds or even a good part of the Little Hours are finished. This we expressly forbid, and we ordain that those who have not gone to the altar before the time for divine Office, shall repair to the choir at once, and not leave until Matins, at least, have been said. In case of disobedience they shall be fined. Furthermore, during the singing of the conventual Mass on feasts, at which all are obliged to be present in choir, no one shall go out to say Mass, under the same penalty of forfeiture which the proper officials shall promptly inflict. On this point the conscience of the delinquent Canon as well as of the official is burdened.

V. As the custom has been introduced in our cathedral whereby the Canons may serve as substitutes one for the other in choir and in church, we desire that the ordinances established by our predecessors and hitherto observed in so praiseworthy a manner, should be studiously followed; and for this end we hereby confirm them. No one shall have a substitute oftener than three times a week, and the Canon himself shall be present on Sunday of his week and discharge in person the duties of his office for the greater part

of the week, if he wishes to enjoy the privilege of being free during the week of vacation. We enjoin that this be most inviolably observed, as we have already commanded in a previous ordinance, which was placed in the sacristy of the cathedral.

VI. The Canon organist shall wear the usual choir dress whenever he has to play at any ecclesiastical function. He shall use the organ at the first and second Vespers of all feasts of the first and second class, and at the first Vespers of feasts of major-double rite. In case he has to play at a high Mass, he shall not leave the choir before the end of Prime. Should he transgress any of these regulations, he is to be fined, and in this matter also we charge the consciences of the officials.

VII. With regard to the chaplains we desire that they should occupy their proper places and observe becoming modesty; for we have been assured that frequently they sit with their legs crossed, a thing that excites astonishment. Let them, likewise, be careful to rise when the Canons enter or leave the choir in a body. They shall observe this regulation under penalty of a fine which we leave to the prudence of the prefect of the choir to determine. We forbid the chaplains under pain of forfeiture to say Mass during the recitation of the divine Office, though they may do so before or after as they choose.

Finally, it has caused us much sorrow to learn that some ecclesiastics, and even Canons, have gone so far as to wear clothes of fashionable colors, and thus attired, walked about the city; nay, what is still more astounding, they have entered the church, been present in the choir, and celebrated holy Mass in this garb, though some years ago we forbade the wearing of such clothing even in the city under penalty of suspension. We, therefore, enjoin on all the Canons, chaplains, and other ecclesiastics, not to attempt in future to enter the church in these colors or even to wear

them about the town, as we shall allow a doublet of a modest color to those only who absolutely require it; otherwise they shall use black, which is the color suited to ecclesiastics, under the same penalty as heretofore. However, when they are traveling or are obliged to go into the country, we permit them to wear clothing of subdued colors, but without any gold or silver ornaments.

In order that what we have herein commanded may be exactly observed by all, and that no one may plead ignorance thereof, we enjoin that on some day when all the Canons are obliged to be present in choir, these regulations be read to them in the sacristy of the cathedral by our chancellor, and in this manner also shall be made known to the other ecclesiastics whatever pertains to them. The original together with the assurance that our will has been obeyed, shall be preserved in the archives of the chancery, so that, etc. . . .

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 365.

To the Sacred Congregation of the Council.

The third report of the saint on the condition of the diocese.

[September? 1771.]

Most Eminent Fathers: In my second report humbly submitted three years ago, and in the first of three years previous which was more lengthy and entered into greater detail, I laid before the Sacred Congregation with sufficient minuteness the material and spiritual condition of the diocese of Sant' Agata. I have but little to mention, therefore, in this report of the sixty-second triennium of the Sixtine Visi-

tation during my visit to the tomb of the Apostles. I should, indeed, be glad to present in person an account of the manner in which I have discharged the duties of my pastoral office; but advanced age and habitual infirmity, to which I have been subject for a long time, positively prevent me. Be pleased, therefore, for these reasons to admit my excuse as valid, and to receive my messenger,[1] — a kindness which I do not hesitate to expect from your generosity.

During the past three years the work that caused me the greatest solicitude was the reparation of the episcopal residence. The buildings were threatened with danger so imminent, that I had to provide against it in all haste. With the help of God, I have completed the necessary repairs.

The number of nuns has increased in the new convent of Our Lady of Constantinople of the Rule of the Most Holy Redeemer, founded about five years ago in the city of Sant' Agata. Besides the three nuns originally sent from Scala to establish this new convent, there are now five professed nuns, four lay-sisters, and seven young girls, some of whom are novices, the others are scholars. All are living as exemplary religious, and observe the rules of the convent and the enclosure with the utmost exactness. During the five years of its existence, the building has been greatly improved. Not only is the church beautifully ornamented with stucco work, but nearly all the altars have been erected after exquisite design. At present, everything is in readiness to proceed to the enlargement of the choir, the erection of a beautiful porch in front of the church, and the completion, in the course of time and with God's help, of whatever is still required for the thorough embellishment of the sacred edifice.

On account of the heavy expenses already incurred in its construction, I have not been able to put a hand to the seminary, begun almost from the foundation some years

1 This messenger was the priest Federico Giuli.

ago. We must wait some time yet until it is free from the debt in which it is still deeply involved. With God's help, however, I trust I shall be able to resume operations at no distant day, and complete this structure, so as better to meet the wants of the seminarists.[1] Meanwhile, the young men are living in some buildings belonging to the palace which have been fitted up as a seminary, and are sufficiently large to accommodate at least eighty.

Most scrupulous care is bestowed upon the improvement and embellishment of the churches throughout the diocese. In Arienzo, the parish church of S. Agnese is nearly finished, only very little of the stucco-work remaining to be done. All parochial duties are now performed there, the faithful coming thither to hear the word of God and to receive the sacraments. Another church in the same district, that of S. Nicola the Great, a magnificient edifice begun from the foundation several years ago, is now almost finished. The work is being pushed according as the means are forthcoming. Last year, there was a lawsuit on the part of the citizens with regard to the tithes which are devoted to this work; but thanks be to God, it was decided in our favor.

1 This hope of the saint was not entirely realized. We read in the "Life of St. Alphonsus", by Father Tannoia, the following: "Alphonsus formed the bold plan of tearing down the old seminary, and erecting it anew from the very foundation. Everyone, Canons and gentlemen of rank, recognizing the necessity of a more commodious building, cordially agreed with the saint. The plans were drawn up, the materials collected, and to the joy of all the work was begun. Alphonsus did not see it completed. His serious infirmity would not allow him to remain in Sant' Agata, and later on compelled him to retire to a house of his Congregation. During his administration only the room of the rector, and four other rooms with various halls were finished."—Lib. iii. ch. xi.

The beautiful campanile of the church of the Annunziata in the city of Airola, is progressing. Judges say it is a splendid piece of workmanship. Little yet remains to bring it to completion.

Another lawsuit was brought against us before the royal tribunals, with regard to the affiliated church that I erected about four years ago in Pastorano, a hamlet of Airola, for the convenience of the faithful of that place and the surrounding country. These people, formerly parishioners of S. Giovanni Battista, a church in Bucciano, another hamlet, could not attend their parish church on account of the distance, the bad roads, and the torrents which in the rainy season render the roads impassable. This lawsuit was undertaken by the parish priest himself during the first year after his installation, and after the curate had been appointed to the church of Pastorano. He contended that the erection of this church should not be countenanced, that things should be restored to their original condition, and that he should be free from paying the stipulated salary of fifty ducats, Neapolitan currency, annually to the curate residing there. But his arguments were overthrown by others more cogent. The suit terminated in our favor, and the curate continues to discharge his duties in the church at Pastorano.

In the district of Frasso, another territory of my diocese, I determined to erect in a more suitable place a church, which was to be affiliated to that of the archpriest, for the faithful who live in the country at a distance from the church, and who cannot come thither particularly in winter, without very serious inconvenience. Owing, however, to an appeal of the archpriest to the ministers of the crown, this necessary work has not thus far been undertaken. I have firm confidence, nevertheless, that with the help of

Divine Providence, I shall shortly be able to remove every difficulty, and proceed unmolested to the accomplishment of this task.[1]

I do not neglect to discharge the duties of my pastoral office in person, as well as in company with my Vicar-General, providing suitable measures for the maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline among the clergy, and the extirpation of vice among the faithful. I, also, incite my parish priests to greater solicitude in the discharge of the particular duties of their office. Public scandals, if any arise, I repress with admonitions, and should they continue, I use more efficacious coercive measures.

Every year I see that the Canonical Visitation is made by my Vicar-General; for on account of my habitual infirmity, I am unable to conduct it in person. When my health does not hinder me, however, I am careful to preach the word of God to my flock; and I, also, summon missionaries and other laborers to my assistance in every part of the diocese.

The examination of confessors and of candidates for ordination, according to a regulation made in the very beginning of my administration, is always held in my presence; and only those who are prudent and well-instructed in Moral Theology, receive the faculties to hear confessions. In like manner, with regard to ordination, and particularly to the Sacred Orders, I usually admit only those of my own seminary, and those whom upon diligent investigation as to their manner of life, I find to be in so far as I may ascertain, learned and of good moral character.

There is nothing of any further moment that I would wish to lay before the Sacred Congregation. If any remarks upon what I have done are necessary unto the edification of the flock confided to my poor charge, I most

[1] This hope of the saint was also frustrated, as we have remarked in a note, *General Correspondence*, vol. ii. page 105.

earnestly beg your Eminences to make them in accordance with the exalted power with which you are invested. I shall most willingly submit my shoulders to the rod, and bow my head with becoming reverence and submission. Humbly kissing the hem of the Sacred Purple, I am,

Your most humble, devoted, and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,

Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti.

Given at Sant' Agata de' Goti . . [*the date is wanting*].

The following is the response of the Sacred Congregation:

To his Lordship, the Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti.

December 5, 1771.

"The Fathers of the Sacred Congregation of the Council of Trent experienced great pleasure in the Lord from your report from which they learned that your Lordship exercises in the administration of your diocese of Sant' Agata that diligence which they desire. And though they could not in the least doubt it, having more than once heretofore witnessed your Lordship's zeal, they could not but rejoice exceedingly in seeing you furnish over and over again new proofs of this pleasing solicitude, and greater manifestation of fidelity. They exhort you, therefore, to continue in the right course upon which you are running, and the nearer you draw to the palm of victory, the more ardently to consult the welfare of your flock.

"These things I say in the name of the Sacred Congregagation. For myself, let me take this occasion to express the sincere regard with which I am your Lordship's, etc."

After an old copy.

LETTER 366.

To Don Pasquale Mauro, Rural Dean of Moiano.

He insists upon the conscientious execution of the ordinance relating to ecclesiasticul attire.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, October 28, 1771.

In reply to your letter we would say that we thought the edict issued by us would be received with satisfaction; indeed, we expected even that we should be in a measure thanked for commanding the ecclesiastics of our diocese to wear the clerical habit in the forenoon from the fifteenth of May to the second of November only, when we could just as easily have required them to do so all the year around, as is done in other dioceses.

We desire, therefore, that by all means this ordinance be carried out in every detail. With regard to clothes of fashionable colors, we will grant a prolongation only till the first of December. By that time, let everyone provide himself with a suit and overcoat of black, or else be amenable to the punishment designated.

Imparting to you the episcopal benediction, we remain, etc.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 367.

To the Same.

With paternal kindness he declares his sentiments with regard to the foregoing letter, and shows his esteem for him and for all the clergy.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, November 4, 1771.

The letter that we wrote you recently need not cause you the least disturbance, because in it we did not at all intend to ill-treat you or to express ourselves as little satisfied with the clergy under your charge. The ordinance was in itself sufficiently clear. When it is said that from the fifteenth of May to the second of November the long soutane should be worn in the forenoon, it does not follow that during that time all ecclesiastics should wear the long soutane until after dinner, provided they are not going to the church; nor does it follow that, because they must wear the cassock, they should, therefore, idle their time away in the stores.

Indeed, you may rest assured that we entertain a very high opinion of your most worthy person and of all the clergy confided to you; and we have received with the greatest pleasure the expression of your common sentiments contained in your letter. They are worthy of most excellent ecclesiastics such as, we are happy to say, you all are.

We bless you and remain

Your most devoted servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the sacristy of the Barnabite Church of San Carlo a Catinari in Rome.

LETTER 368.

To his Majesty, Ferdinand IV., King of Naples.

He entreats him not to allow the nomination of all the Canons of a certain chapter to be made by the municipality, and points out the disorders that might arise from such a course.

[1772.]

Sire: As at present the affair of the collegiate church of San Andrea in the district of Arienzo, which forms a part of my diocese, is before your Majesty for consideration, I imagine that some of the people of that place will, perhaps, endeavor to effect that your Majesty should order the nomination of all the Canons to be made by the municipality.

I have not, however, been able to ascertain with any assurance whether they have made this request to your Majesty, nor do I desire to know anything about it. All that I desire is, to represent to your Majesty that, if all the Canons were to be nominated by the municipality, and consequently every nomination made in council, such a course would give rise to innumerable sins of hatred and discord in every case in which a canonry was to be filled, not to speak of the disgrace of frequently seeing persons proposed who are unworthy of the position.

It is this thought, namely, to prevent so many sins, that has principally urged me humbly to place this representation before your Majesty. I entreat you so to regulate this matter as to secure some remedy for the evils to which I call attention.

Humbly prostrate before your Majesty's throne, I remain

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti.

After the original in the possession of his Eminence, Cardinal Guglielmo Sanfelice, Archbishop of Naples.

LETTER 369.

To Mgr. Carlo Bergamo, Newly-elected Bishop of Gaeta.[1]

Advice with respect to the government of his diocese.

Live Jesùs, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, March 12, 1772.

The elevation of your Lordship to the episcopate caused me very great displeasure, because I feared that the good you had been doing at Naples would perish in consequence. But, on the other hand, it gave me much consolation that you are to take charge of a diocese which, I am told, is in great destitution, and therefore needs a zealous pastor.

As I am well acquainted with your fervent zeal, I take the liberty to give you some advice with regard to certain matters that will enter largely into your career,—matters that I have myself learned by experience. I do not for one moment dream that your Lordship should be obliged to act accordingly, for each one must regulate himself according to the light he receives from on high; but I submit

[1] Mgr. Carlo Bergamo, born at Naples, November 4, 1726, was elected Bishop of Gaeta, December 16, 1771, and governed that diocese till 1785.

them to you for consideration and reflection, for God's greater glory. I should have ardently desired to communicate these matters to you by word of mouth, but I do not wish to inconvenience you by asking you to pay me a visit in my diocese, and I cannot possibly go to Naples.

It is quite unnecessary for me to recommend to you the holy missions, for I already know your high appreciation of them. The greatest blessing a bishop can confer upon his diocese is, to provide that the missions be given every three years. What I would ask of you, though, is, that when the missionaries come, you would entreat them to give the exercises of the mission in every place, no matter how small it may be. The practice of the Congregations is, to give the mission in some central locality, in the hope that the surrounding country will come to attend them. Vain hope! A few pious persons will come; but those who are living in sin and who, above all, are to be taken into account, will not, and their place will be left without the mission. The missions are intended particularly for those whose conscience is in a bad state. In my own diocese, I have the missions given in every locality, even if it contains only two hundred souls.

I recommend you, also, not to spare yourself in preaching in person in all the places of your diocese. The voice of the bishop reaps harvests far more abundant than those of other preachers. This remark is particularly applicable in your case, since God has given you a special talent for preaching. Endeavor, therefore, to preach the principal sermon in every part of your diocese, or, at least, in the larger places, and if you cannot obtain missionaries, take those diocesan confessors who live in other towns. You should do this especially during the time of the Canonical Visitation. At least, do not fail to have a three days' course of sermons throughout the diocese.

It would be well, also, to have the exercises of a retreat

for the clergy in those places where they are most numerous, and during the Visitation, at least the retreat of three days.

The same I would ask of you in favor of the convents of nuns, with whom you will have to practise great patience. Be firm in not permitting innovations that might become abuses, and abolish the custom of admitting relatives within the enclosure as is done in many places. I have myself labored strenuously to do away with this abuse, and I do not allow even parents to enter; for once you concede it to them, others, also, who are not parents will come.

I beseech you not to conduct the Visitation in a hurried manner. Receive the manifestation of conscience in secret from everyone of the priests and from the nuns also. I do not know whether it is expedient for a bishop to have nuns for his penitents. In convents of nuns, the more confidence one gives, the more advantage they take.

With regard to candinates for ordination, I make it a point not to promote to Holy Orders any who do not attend the seminary. But it is quite another thing if there is question of a cleric of good talents and moral character, who is not able to enter the seminary. The misfortune, however, is that in the seminary some ecclesiastics make great appearance of virtue; but once ordained, they go to ruin. It is necessary, therefore, to exhibit great firmness in not ordaining any who do not give signs of the ecclesiastical spirit; and if a cleric has been guilty of grave delinquency, even though he be in Sacred Orders, a trial of several years is sometimes required. Experience will, however, teach you all these things, as it has already taught me.

It is important to be severe in the examination; for if the young men do not study before their elevation to the priesthood, they will not look at a book afterward. I do not give my approbation to priests unless they know the

whole of Moral Theology, and I insist that, before receiving subdeaconship, the candidates be well-grounded in the more difficult treatises; as, for example, Conscience, Human Acts, and the Precepts of the Decalogue as far as Contracts. My reason for this is, that if they receive the subdeaconship without knowing anything, they will remain ignorant; and, later on, we shall have to promote them to the priesthood notwithstanding their ignorance.

I recommend you, moreover, to have particular attention paid to the study of Latin and Moral Theology in the seminary; because once the young men are in the ministry, either they will not find teachers in these branches or they will not study any more. I repeat, I make the young men study Moral Theology before promotion to the priesthood, in order that I may be able to select for approbation those who commend themselves by their good conduct. In this way, the bishop can provide for the welfare of his diocese by forming good parish priests and good curates.

For those who are to hear confessions, a long and thorough examination is necessary. In your diocese you will find many incompetent confessors, and you should, therefore, from the very beginning subject them to such an examination, even though they be parish priests. Pay particular attention to the members of religious orders who desire to have faculties, because the religious do not study Moral Theology. I do not allow any of the Lenten preachers that come to my diocese, to hear confession without passing an examination. The certificates of faculties that they show from other bishops, cannot move me; for some bishops are accustomed to grant faculties to every preacher without discrimination.

Be cautious, also, with regard to those whom you have around you, your secretary and the master of the palace. Remind them that they must not assume any responsibilities

present commendations, or interfere in any way with the affairs of the episcopate.

If there are any fallen women in the diocese, see that they are brought before the governor to be reminded by him of their obligation to conduct themselves decently under penalty of imprisonment. When they fail to follow this admonition, see that they are arrested, and pay the constables yourself. My entire revenue, I may say, is consumed in paying the officers of the law. Reprimand produces very little effect upon those unfortunate people. It would be well, therefore, to be on very friendly terms with the governor, and now and then, as for example, at Christmas and Easter, to make him some little present.

In cases in which illicit relations exist with married women there is some difficulty, because here one cannot interfere, unless the husband lodges a complaint. But if the affair assumes the nature of a public scandal, endeavor to secure a complaint on the part of the neighbors; for then you can have recourse to the courts. I had immediate recourse to the king when I found priests implicated in intrigues with married women, and several times have I received his permission to keep them confined in a monastery for a number of years. If there are in your diocese priests who are addicted to evil practices, the best punishment is to send them into exile; everything else fails.

With regard to reserved cases, I have reserved absolution from the sin of blasphemy against the saints or of holy days, even for the first offence. In this I have followed the example of his Lordship of Benevento, and of the saintly Archbishop of Salerno, Mgr. di Capua,[1] and I have been successful in a great measure in eradicating blasphemy, the principal sin in the kingdom of Naples. Faculties to ab-

[1] Mgr. Giovanni Fabrizio di Capua.

solve these cases, I have given only to the parish priests, never to their assistants.

Let me add with regard to the study of Moral Theology in the seminary, see that in the seminary text-books are used, for very little profit is derived from written notes.

Not to weary your patience further, I shall close. I beseech you not to forget to recommend me to Jesus Christ according to our agreement, as I shall not neglect to do for you. Reverently kissing your Lordship's hand, I remain

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After an old copy.

LETTER 370.

To Don Liborio Carfora, Rural Dean.

Effectual means of diffusing the knowledge of Christian doctrine among the faithful.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, November 17, 1772.

It has come to our knowledge, that parents, guardians, masters, and those who by their station are placed in charge over others, have been negligent in sending their children, wards, servants, or subjects to the Christian doctrine, that the parish priest conducts, and which we have already commanded under severe penalties, should be held every feast of obligation. You will, therefore, announce at the conference on moral cases to all the confessors and parish priests of Airola, as also to those of the adjoining hamlet of Bucciano, that, before hearing the confessions of fathers, mothers, guardians, etc., they shall inquire whether they send those under their care to the instruction in Christian doctrine. And in case these persons frequently

fall into this negligence, they should not be granted absolution.

Furthermore, the confessors should examine all adults with regard to the necessary knowledge in matters of faith; and in absolving them they shall regulate themselves according to what has been written upon this matter by ourselves and other authors. They shall oblige them, or at least try to induce them, to attend the short instruction that is given at the first and second Masses on feasts of obligation when a number of people are present. If the confessors perceive that their penitents are ignorant and neglect to acquire the knowledge of the truths necessary for salvation, they shall bear in mind that they cannot absolve them until they are sufficiently instructed.

Imparting to you our pastoral benediction, we remain

Your devoted servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After an old copy.

LETTER 371.

To Father Terzi, a Dominican at Sant' Agata.

He requests him to denounce in the Lenten sermons the injustice of two contracts.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, March 30, 1773.

As your Reverence is at present engaged in conducting the spiritual exercises, we beg you to call attention to the injustice of two contracts which, we understand, have taken place at Sant' Agata.

The first of these is, as follows: A man loans to a farmer two oxen worth between sixty and seventy ducats, upon

the condition that every year the farmer shall pay the owner ten *tomoli*[1] of grain. This is, without doubt, an injustice, for you cannot require ten measures of grain for sixty ducats. There is yet another injustice connected with this, namely, in case the oxen should die, the farmer must pay the owner one-half of the loss. This is equally unjust, for the capital when lost is lost to the owner.

The second contract is that in which a sow is given in a similar manner. If she has young, they are to be sold and the proceeds divided equally; but if she dies, the farmer must pay one-half of the loss.

We beg your Reverence repeatedly to inveigh against such injustice, for once will not do. You are acquainted with the teaching of the moralists, that a preacher is bound in conscience to denounce all public contracts that are unjust. We expect your Reverence, therefore, to do something against these, so that the owners in question may know that people who make such contracts are in a state of sin.

Tannoia, *Life*, book iii. ch. 62.

LETTER 372.

To his Majesty, Ferdinand IV., King of Naples.

He defends his manner of acting in the conferring of benefices against accusations brought against him.

ARIENZO, May 25, 1773.

Sire: I have received with most profound respect the rescript which your Majesty sent me together with the petition of the citizens of Sant' Agata, in which they lay before your Majesty two grave complaints against me: first, that I do not reside in Sant' Agata, my episcopal city, but in Arienzo; and, secondly, that in the conferring of canonries, I prefer those who are not citizens of Sant' Agata to

[1] A *tomolo* is equal to about a bushel and a half.

them. Your Majesty commands me to say what I have to answer to these charges, and I forthwith obey.

With regard to the fact, that I reside in Arienzo, I would say, that, when I first assumed the government of my diocese, I did reside at my cathedral in Sant' Agata for about five years. But as Sant' Agata is a very damp place on account of the high mountains that surround it, I was compelled by the advice of my physicians and the nature of my sickness, asthma, to go to live in a drier climate. Accordingly, I came to Arienzo, another city of my diocese, and here I have enjoyed much better health. My residence here is quite free from any scruple of conscience, because Pope Benedict XIV., in the Bull *Ubi primum*, published December 3, 1740, has declared with regard to the residence of bishops, that it suffices that they reside within the limits of their diocese. Here are his very words addressed to the bishops: "You should observe the obligation of residing personally in your episcopal city, or in the diocese." [1]

As to my action in preferring to a vacant canonry in the cathedral a stranger rather than an inhabitant of Sant' Agata, the citizens have no longer any reason to complain on that score; for I have recommended to the present Pontiff a priest of Sant' Agata, to whom the Holy Father has already granted the position, and thus the citizens have obtained what they desire. But the real issue is this, as appears from what they say in their petition, that, in filling vacancies among the Canons, citizens shall always be preferred, even though others more worthy than they, but who are not of Sant' Agata, enter into the *concursus*.

With regard to this matter, I beg your Majesty to consider what I now lay before you in all humility. It is only just that citizens of Sant Agata, provided they are not un-

1 Oportet, ut personalem in ecclesia vestra, vel diœcesi servetis residentiam.

worthy of the position, should be preferred to outsiders, unless some very urgent reason require a contrary course of action. But shall the citizens always be preferred to other more deserving ecclesiastics of the diocese? This is the real question. I do not hesitate to say that all other things being equal, they should be preferred. When, however, there are other ecclesiastics of the diocese notably more deserving than they, I do not see with what pretence of justice the citizens should claim preferment, except where this is provided for by express law in the foundation itself or by custom. In Sant' Agata, there is neither foundation law nor custom to that effect; for until now many diocesan ecclesiastics have been admitted into the chapter; and it is wrong to call diocesan ecclesiastics strangers, since together with the city clergy they constitute only one body, the clergy of the diocese. In their petition, the citizens of Sant' Agata have given themselves much trouble to adduce certain teachings that have very little bearing on the matter in hand, and particularly on the principal point, namely, the grave obligation of the bishop to prefer the more deserving of the clergy when there is question of conferring benefices, and especially canonries.

I am well aware that a number of Probabilist authors teach that it remains with the good pleasure of the bishop to grant a simple benefice to whomsoever he chooses, even though there be other claimants more deserving. But for my part, I have always held, and I still maintain with the more common and more probable opinion, that the bishop is bound in conscience under pain of grievous sin to confer every benefice, whether it has the care of souls attached or not, upon the more deserving ecclesiastics. My grounds for maintaining this opinion are the authority of the sacred canons, the teaching of the Fathers, and intrinsic reason. I cannot, then, see how, in appointing to vacancies, I

could without serious remorse of conscience prefer one less worthy to one more deserving.

Among the sacred canons, I find, *cap. unic. Ut Ecclesia Benef. sine dim.*, that the Bishop of Milan was reprimanded by Pope Innocent III. for having passed over a more deserving person to confer a simple benefice upon one less worthy. The words are: *You should have conferred the ecclesiastical office and benefice upon him who was more worthy.*[1] Again, in the chapter *Custos de officio custod.*, it is said: *To this office (of custodian) only those shall be ordained whose lives are more exemplary and more holy than others.*[2] The same thing is expressed in several other canons, which, for brevity's sake, I omit.

The Fathers of the Church speak in the same strain. St. Augustine writes: *And it seems to me that there lies indeed no small sin in the accepting of persons . . . . for who would suffer a rich man to be raised to the seat of honor in the Church, to the neglect of one who is poor, but more learned and more holy?*[3] And St. Gregory the Great says: *Let him be ordained whom God wills and who appears to be most fit.*[4] St. Thomas, likewise, *Quodlib. 6, art. 9*, teaches that the bishop is obliged to confer benefices on the more deserving, that is, on those whom he knows will be more useful to the Church. This doctrine is confirmed, also, by Innocent XI.'s condemnation of Proposition 47.

1 "Debuisti ecclesiasticum officium et beneficium in persona magis idonea dispensare."

2 "Ad hoc opus (ad officium custodis) tales ordinentur, quales meliores et sanctiores esse viderint."

3 "Nec sane putandum est, quantum arbitror, leve esse peccatum in personarum acceptatione . . . .: quis enim ferat, eligi divitem ad sedem honoris in Ecclesia, contempto paupere instructiore atque sanctiore?"—*Epist. class.* 3. *epist.* 167, *n.* 18 *de sententia Jacob.*

4 "Ille, qui Deo placuerit et utilior visus fuerit, ordinetur."—*Lib. iv. epist.* 47.

That proposition maintained that the command of the Council of Trent, to elect to benefices the more worthy, referred only to such benefices as were provided for by *concursus*. "The Council says when a *concursus* takes place", are the words of the proposition. But this proposition was condemned by the Sovereign Pontiff. Consequently, also in benefices to which the care of souls is not attached, and where no *concursus* takes place, the more deserving should be chosen.

What to me is of greater weight than all else with regard to this opinion, is the intrinsic reason, to which I can see no answer to the contrary. It is as follows: according to all theologians, it is certain that the end for which benefices have been founded by benefactors and instituted by the Church, is twofold: first, to reward the merit of the subjects by recompensing their knowledge and the application by which they have striven to render themselves more worthy. Now, as the bishop is not the owner, but only the executor of the benefices, he is obliged in accordance with distributive justice to regard the merits of him who is more deserving. This St. Thomas very clearly shows (*2 2. qu. 63, art. 2 ad 1*) where he says that it is a grievous sin to confer a benefice upon an ecclesiastic who is less worthy: *If they are preferred to those who are more deserving, it is a sin of accepting persons* [which in the preceding article St. Thomas unhesitatingly calls a mortal sin] *in the distribution of spiritual offices, of which the bishop is not the owner, but only the dispenser.*[1] On this subject, the celebrated Prospero Fagnano says (*cap. Cum dilectus de consuetud. n. 19*) that the preferment of the more deserving, according to distributive justice in the collation of benefices, is established by all the laws and all theologians: *Every*

[1] "Si dignioribus præferantur, est peccatum personarum acceptationis in dispensatione spiritualium, quorum Prælatus ecclesiasticus non est dominus, sed dispensator."

law demands that the more deserving, the more holy, be selected, and therefore they offend against distributive justice who, passing over a more deserving person, promote one who is simply worthy, as all the authors remark in speaking of cap. Constitutis 10 de Appell.[1] This doctrine is approved as the more common opinion, not only by the writers of the Extreme Rigorist School, but likewise by the Probabilists; as, for example, Lugo and Father Viva (*in Prop. 47, n. 9*).

The second end for which benefices are principally established by the Church, is the welfare of the Church, namely, that in this way she may receive better ministers for her service; and by *better* is to be understood, as St. Thomas explains (*2. 2, qu. 63, art. 2 in corp.*) those who are more useful for the diocese. His words are: *The conferring of spiritualities* [as are benefices] *is particularly destined for the welfare of the Church.*[2] And a little further on, *art. 2 ad 3*, he adds that, although before the law, the election of the less worthy would be valid, in conscience the one who makes the appointment should prefer that candidate who in view of the public welfare is more deserving. *As far as the conscience of the elector is concerned, he should* [that is, he is under grave obligation] *choose him who is more worthy absolutely, or in view of the general welfare.*[3]

This doctrine of St. Thomas is the common teaching of all other authors, also. Covarruvia quoted by Van Espen, *tom. 3, sect. 3, tit. 12, cap. 2, n. 3*, says: *By the consent*

1 "Omnia jura clamant, ut meliores et sanctiores eligantur, et ideo peccant contra justitiam distributivam, qui, omisso digniori, eligunt dignum, ut notant omnes in cap. Constitutis 10 de Appell."

2 "Dispensationes spiritualium principalius ordinantur ad utilitatem communem."

3 "Sed quantum ad conscientiam eligentis, necesse est eligere meliorem, vel simpliciter, vel in comparatione ad bonum commune."

of all the annotation in cap. Constitutis 10 de Appellat., obtains, namely, that the bishop is obliged to grant the benefice to the more worthy.[1] Domenico Viva, otherwise a Probabilist, says (*in Prop. 47 damnata ab Innoc. XI.*) that the bishop who prefers the less worthy even to a benefice which has not the care of souls, is obliged to make restitution to the community for the injury caused by such an election.

Since, then, benefices are instituted by the Church for the welfare of the entire diocese, the bishop must regard the welfare of the entire diocese rather than that of the particular city in which he has his cathedral. Moreover, it is said that those subjects who are better qualified to promote the good of the diocese should be chosen, and not the more learned, although, as a rule, experience shows that the more learned turn out to be the more useful. This must be borne in mind particularly in the election of the Canons of the cathedral, for they are the councillors of the bishop. In ancient times the Canons composed the legislative body of the diocese, according to what Selvaggio says in his *Institutiones Canonicæ: by whose advice ecclesiastical affairs shall be conducted.*[2] And, therefore, Alexander III. (*cap. Novis de his quæ fiunt a Prælato*), writes: *Your wise prudence knows very well that you and your brethren constitute one body, in such a manner that you shall be found to be the head, they, the members.*[3] True it is, that nowadays this measure is not observed so strictly as in times gone by; but still it cannot be denied that the Canons are the right arm of the bishop. From their num-

[1] "Communi omnium consensu exstat annotatum, in cap. Constitutis 10 de Appellat., quod Prælatus teneatur beneficio præficere digniorem."

[2] "Quorum consilio ecclesiastica negotia tractarentur."

[3] "Novit plenius tuæ discretionis prudentia, qualiter tu et fratres tui unum corpus sitis; ita quod tu caput, illi membra esse probentur."

ber he usually selects the diocesan examiners; with them he formulates the statutes (*Conc. Trid. sess. xxv. de Ref. cap. 10*); with them he effects the coalition of churches and benefices (*Clem. ult. de reb. eccles. non alien.*); with them he holds the synod. It is the Canons that the bishop sends to make the Visitation of the diocese; with their vote he decides all the important affairs of the administration (*Conc. Trid. sess. xxiv. de Ref., cap. 6*); and, finally, it is from their number the Vicar-Capitular must be selected in the event of the bishop's death or resignation. For these reasons, the Council of Trent (*sess. xxii. de Ref., cap. 2*) makes the following general regulation: *Whosoever is, hereafter, to be promoted to the episcopate shall not only be fully qualified by birth, age, morals, and life, ... but shall, also, possess such learning as to be able to discharge the obligations of the office about to be confided to him. He shall, therefore, have been previously promoted by merit in some university for studies, to be a master, or doctor, or licentiate, in sacred theology, or in canon law; or shall be declared, by the public testimony of some academy, fit to teach others.*[1]

With all this before our mind, if the citizens of the cathedral city should in all cases of filling vacancies among the Canons, be preferred even to the more worthy among the diocesan clergy, the common welfare of the diocese would suffer. And this loss would be two-fold: for in the first place, the diocesan clergy would take very little trouble to advance in their studies, knowing that, although less deserving than themselves, the clergy of the cathedral

1 "Quicumque posthac ad ecclesias cathedrales erit assumendus, is non solum natalibus, ætate, moribus, et vita . . . sit præditus. . . . Scientia vero præter hæc ejusmodi polleat, ut muneris sibi injungendi necessitati possit satisfacere; ideoque antea in universitate studiorum magister, sive doctor, aut licentiatus in sacra theologia, vel jure canonico, merito sit promotus, aut publico alicujus academiæ testimonio idoneus ad alios docendos ostendatur."

city would be preferred in every case; and on the other hand, the city clergy, feeling sure that they would invariably be preferred even to the more worthy of the diocesan clergy, would, likewise, apply themselves very little to render themselves better qualified. The result would be that, since the city clergy must be chosen in preference to the diocesan, though the latter be more worthy, the cathedral chapter would be filled with ignorant men, and the bishop would have to seek abroad for strangers to be his councillors and to look after the greater welfare of his diocese.

This, Sire, is what in obedience to your command, I have thought necessary to lay before your Majesty with regard to the present affair, in order to set my conscience at rest. Humbly prostrate before your Majesty's throne, I await your venerable decrees withal. I return the petition of the citizens of Sant' Agata, as you commanded, and bowing profoundly before you, I remain

Your Majesty's
Most faithful servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 373.

Document in which the saint declares null and void the conferring of a benefice.[1]

ARIENZO, September 28, 1773.

By these presents, I make the following deposition under oath, and I make known to each and ever yone concerned, and who in any manner, whether directly or indirectly, is interested in the matter herein set forth, and to each and every judge or tribunal, whether in court or outside of juridical proceedings, that on the 26th day of November of the past year, 1772, I being in this district of Arienzo, in my diocese of Sant' Agata, the Abbate Don Pasquale Rubini appeared before me and requested me to confer upon him the simple benefice of the title of Sant' Angelo a Palomba, existing in a church of this district of Arienzo, and

[1] With regard to this declaration and the occurrence to which it refers, Father Domenico Corsano deposed, as follows, in the process of beatification (fol. 427 seq.) in 1788:

"The servant of God, being misinformed that the appointment to a benefice entitled, Sant' Angelo a Palomba, in the district of Arienzo, devolved upon him, conferred it upon Don Pasquale Rubini, in whose favor he had even drawn up the decree. As soon as he learned, however, that the benefice in question belonged to the Holy See and not to himself, he drew up a public document annulling his own decree, and this document is still preserved in the episcopal chancery of Sant' Agata. The benefice was granted by the Sovereign Pontiff to a priest named Guarnaccio. This gave rise to a lawsuit between Rubini and Guarnaccio. Both had recourse to the king, but were referred by his Majesty to Mgr. Liguori, to whom, also, his Majesty intimated that he should place in possession of the benefice, whichever one he thought best. Acting upon this command, the servant of God at once conferred it upon Guarnaccio, as the one who had been appointed by the Sovereign Pontiff, of whom he was ever a most dutiful son, and this in spite of the fact that Rubini was the brother of his Vicar-General at Sant' Agata."

made vacant by the death of Abbate Don Rocco Guarnacci, the previous incumbent of said benefice. The said Abbate Rubini assuring me that the conferring of this benefice devolved upon the bishop, by reason of the death of Don Rocco during the episcopal month of September, I, firmly believing that said conferring did indeed devolve upon me, in good faith, conferred this benefice upon the said Abbate Rubini. Before turning over to him the papers, however, I made protestation to him that if, by any chance, it should happen that said benefice belonged or was reserved to the Holy See in any way whatsoever, I did not by my act there and then intend to bestow it upon him. He promised that in such an event he would not say anything, and with this condition and the proviso above-mentioned, I signed the papers in his favor.

Recently, however, I ascertained that the appointment to the said benefice belonged to the Sovereign Pontiff, both because it is a consistorial benefice, and because it became vacant in the Roman Curia. I learned, also, that the said benefice had been conferred by His Holiness upon another before my appointment of Rubini; for my decree was expedited on the 26th of November of the past year, 1772, whereas the Bull of the Pope was issued on the 9th, or seventeen days earlier. For several reasons, therefore, my conferring of said benefice upon Abbate Rubini has become null and void.

Wherefore, in so far as such action may be necessary, I by these presents, annul my decree of appointment, and declare null and void the act of possession and all the other acts of my episcopal chancery in regard to this collation; and I affirm that, had I the least knowledge that the aforesaid benefice belonged and was reserved to the Holy See, I would not for any motive have conferred it upon anyone.

In order, therefore, that my appointment may not in any wise be prejudicial to him upon whom said benefice has

been legitimately conferred by His Holiness, I have deemed it my duty in the cause of truth to make, and I hereby do make freely and of my own accord, the present declaration under oath, subscribing it with my own hand and affixing my own seal.

ALFONSO MARIA, *Bishop of Sant' Agata.*
ANGELO PISANI, *pro-Chancellor.*

I, Brother Francesco Antonio Romito, of the Most Holy Redeemer, declare under oath that the foregoing was dictated to me by his Lordship Mgr. de Liguori.

After an old copy preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 374.

To Archdeacon Rainone.

He asks his advice concerning the conferring of a canonry.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, December 4, 1774.

With regard to the prebend, I have already determined as you advised; but you should not make the matter public yet.

I am still in perplexity over the canonry, for the parties presenting themselves are either quite incapable or ignorant. There are three that I have especially in my mind with regard to it. In Sant' Agata, there is no one more suited than Don Giovanni Fusari, a very capable man, stationed at S. Tommaso. But he has been only eight or nine months there, and he is doing a great deal of good. If removed, he will have to leave unfinished the many noble works he has begun, and besides, he is somewhat young.

The second upon whom my eye is fixed is Don Pio di Lucca, a very worthy priest, who was attached to S. Tom-

maso's for three years, but was compelled to leave on account of ill-health. He is, moreover, well advanced in years, has entered the *concursus* several times, and is a man of irreproachable life, as is also Don Giovanni.

My third candidate is Don Pasquale Diodato, the present parish priest of Bucciano, who desires very much to obtain the position. He far surpasses the other two in learning, is somewhat advanced in years, and possesses very sound judgment. I desire to know your opinion of these three candidates.

I am fully aware that the citizens of Sant' Agata will claim that the canonry should be conferred upon one of their towns-people. But I could not determine upon anyone from Sant' Agata more deserving than Don Giovanni Fusari, who is still quite young, and has done but little for the Church as yet. Let me have your opinion in the matter at all events; for it is certain, that when there are in the diocese other subjects more worthy, the claim that citizens should be preferred, is unjust, because the clergy, those of the cathedral city as well as those of the diocese, constitute only one body. Furthermore, it is to the general welfare of the diocese that all should endeavor to perfect themselves in their studies, and render themselves more deserving, which they will do when they see that priests from the diocese may be preferred even to those of the cathedral.

You may rest assured with regard to secrecy, etc.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 375.

To the Parish Priests of the Diocese.

He recommends the teaching of Christian doctrine in the manner and at the time prescribed.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, February 9, 1775.

We understand that the missionaries have complained that, in general, the people of this diocese are poorly instructed with regard to the rudiments of faith. We, therefore, beseech all the parish priests to bestow greater attention to this work.

We have already said, and we here repeat, that it is not necessary to conduct the instruction for the children every day during Lent, as was done formerly. It will suffice if it be given daily for one week before the Communion of the children. But it has been already ordained, and we now renew that ordinance, that the Christian doctrine should be held every Sunday. We entreat the parish priests not to leave this duty entirely to the clerics, but to see that all their curates and other substitutes, who are capable, also conduct this class. Moreover, the parish priests shall themselves give the Christian doctrine once or twice a month, and the rest of the time be present to see how the others conduct it.

We thought that the people of our diocese were well-instructed; but now, notwithstanding our numerous ordinances, we learn that they are deficient in the knowledge of their faith. This is probably the case in all the parishes, certainly (as we have been told to our sorrow) in a very considerable number.

Once again, therefore, we beseech all the parish priests to tell those who say Mass in the country chapels on festivals to read to the people the summary of Christian doctrine

that we have composed and had printed. Let them, also, inform us whether the summary is read in the parish churches and the chapels mentioned, and whether the faithful are required to repeat it in a loud voice. The parish priests shall, likewise, let us know if any priest who says Mass in these chapels does not comply with this ordinance; for we shall quickly apply a remedy. Let them tell those who have care of these chapels to have the sheet containing this summary mounted on a tablet, or at least on strong card-board, for if this is not done, the sheet will soon be lost.

Hoping that for the future all will be more attentive in the discharge of this most important duty of teaching Christian doctrine, we bless you, and request you to return this original to our chancery, with the assurance that our desires have been complied with.

After the Roman edition.

LETTER 376.

To Don Michele Nuzzi.

In future, he will not confer benefices on strangers.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, February 27, 1775.

Most Illustrious Sir: You may rest assured that we have already revoked a certain promise made by us to a priest who did not belong either to the city or to the diocese of Sant' Agata. That promise was given on condition that the chapter would ask for his nomination; but we afterward learned that such a request was invalid.

There is the end of the matter; and you may be sure that neither now nor in future, will we confer any benefice upon a stranger.

With this assurance, we have the honor to be, etc.
After the Roman edition.

LETTER 377.

To Canon Cicerone, at Frosinone.

Answer to a question proposed to him.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA DE' PAGANI, July 21, 1776.

Most Illustrious and Reverend Sir: I have received your esteemed letter, and in reply I would say that the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, it seems to me, answers with sufficient detail the various questions you proposed to me therein.

You have, as you tell me in your letter, a copy of my *Practice*, or *Compendium of Moral Theology*. Be pleased, then, to look at the third volume (*Praxis Confess. cap. vii. § vii. n. 110 seq.*), and you will find the doctrine of St. Thomas. To it I give a thousand times more credence than to the Capuchin who was empowered by the Inquisition of Sicily to say that God never permits the evil one to have power to lead a person to commit wicked actions. St. Thomas teaches, as you will perceive in the passage quoted, that, although the devil cannot lead a person, whether obsessed or simply subject to his infestation, to will to commit sin, he may, nevertheless, God permitting, prevent such a one from using his reason and even induce him to perform some act which is in itself sinful; as, for example, move the tongue to utter blasphemy or obscene talk; and in the same way he can move the hands of such a person to throw sacred objects on the ground, or to perform other evil deeds. Here are the very words of St. Thomas: *I answer that the devil by his own natural power*,

unless prevented by Almighty God, is able to force one to perform an act which is in itself sinful.[1]

The propositions of Michael Molinos have been condemned not only by Sicily, but also by the Pope. Now in Proposition 17, Molinos says: *Having placed our free will in the hands of God . . . . if nature is excited, we should permit this excitement to take place.*[2] This doctrine is false, because we are obliged to resist as much as we can. Again in Proposition 47, he says: *Cum hujusmodi violentiæ occurrunt, sinere oportet ut satanas operetur . . . etiamsi sequantur pollutiones, etc.* The impious wretch maintains that the devil can force us to commit sin; but St. Jerome says: *Entice and persuade he may, force us he cannot,*[3] that is, he cannot induce the will to commit sin.

St. Thomas, therefore, concludes, that when a man's reason is hemmed in on all sides, there is no sin; but if reason is not entirely disturbed, there is sin to the extent to which man is able to resist but does not. When, then, cases of this kind occur, the confessor should be careful to examine the penitent to see whether at the time he could resist, but failed to do so.

When these cases come before me in the confessional, they have, in truth, greatly perplexed me, especially if there is question *de re turpi;* for in such cases, concupiscence blinds and allures. Yet I hold for certain what St. Thomas and so many other theologians, cited in the *Practice*, teach, that an act may take place without the sin when the will does not consent thereto. I have had many very

[1] "Respondeo dicendum, quod diabolus propria virtute, nisi refrænetur a Deo, potest aliquem inducere ex necessitate ad faciendum aliquem actum, qui de suo genere peccatum est." 1-2. qu. 80. art. 3. in corp.

[2] "Tradito Deo libero arbitrio . . . . . si natura commovetur, oportet sinere ut commoveatur."

[3] "Persuadere potest, præcipitare non potest."

devout souls who in this way have not committed any sin. Still I would say that in this matter great circumspection is necessary both on the part of the confessor and of the penitent.

Let me say that to bring together all that is contained in the *Practice* upon this point, I worked about two months examining all the authors who have treated the subject; and I do not think I could find anything more to add. To answer your questions in detail, I should have to copy all that I have said in the *Practice;* but this would be an entirely useless task, and I would not dream of undertaking it, because by reason of my infirmities and advanced age of eighty years, my head is utterly ruined.

I believe, however, that instead of seeking the teaching of theologians in this matter, the confessor should attend rather to give to his penitents remedies to guard themselves as much as possible against these vexations of the evil one. In the first place, let them frequently use the private exorcism: *Exsurgat Deus, et dissipentur inimici ejus*, or, "In the name of Jesus Christ depart from me thou evil spirit." It would be well for the director to make these exorcisms himself occasionally. However, the shortest and most efficacious exorcism is the frequent invocation of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

The frequent use of holy water, also, is very beneficial, as is, likewise, the sign of the Cross made upon the forehead and breast; for by that sign the enemy is put to flight.

But to persons afflicted in this manner, and who are at the same time in danger of falling, the most useful of all remedies is prayer, particularly prayer before the crucifix or a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, asking for mercy and compassion. If the temptations and impure motions gain strength, sighs and tears should be added to prayer. Acting in this manner, our Lord will surely come to their assist-

ance. Of special value, also, is the daily recitation of some particular prayers to the Mother of God, who is the Mother most pure.

Before closing, let me take this opportunity to thank you for the great kindness which, as my companions tell me, you have shown toward the foundation recently accepted by me in Frosinone. To tell the truth, when the question of establishing a house there was first discussed, I was disheartened to learn that there was but little to maintain our Fathers. But when I learned the devotion, the offers, and what is more, the cordiality of your people, I accepted this foundation with most cheerful alacrity. I trust it will be the fruitful source of much good to your illustrious city, as also to surrounding country. And may it all be for the glory of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary!

I beseech you to recommend this foundation to God every day; for from the letter which I have received from you, I perceive that you are a priest closely united to Jesus Christ, and desirous of seeing him loved and honored by all. I ask you, also, to pray particularly for me who am now near my death. I have received the Holy Viaticum four times and Extreme Unction twice, and I am expecting every day to be my last. I trust, however, before my death, to see this new foundation, which is the last I shall accept and which is on that account very dear to me, firmly established. In return, I shall not fail to recommend you daily to Jesus Christ.

With the most profound esteem,

Your very devoted and obedient servant,

ALFONSO MARIA DE LIGUORI, *Bishop.*

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 378.

To a Priest.

Wherein true devotion consists.—The obligations of a good pastor.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

NOCERA, October 21, 1778.

I reply in few words to your most esteemed letter. True devotion consists in the fulfilment of our respective duties. As you are a priest charged with the care of souls, endeavor to discharge the duties of this position properly. Do not grow weary or spare yourself in removing scandals, in directing souls in the way of perfection, and in being always at hand in the spiritual needs of the flock entrusted to your care. To the pastors of souls were directed those words: "The good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."

Do not shrink from hearing the confessions of men; rather let it appear that you are more accessible to them than to women. In your discourses, in public and in private, strive to inculcate devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin. Sometimes pray for me.

Tendering you my services, I have the honor to be, etc.

After an old copy.

Supplementary Letters.

LETTER I.[1]

To Father Carmine Picone, Vice-Master of Novices, at Ciorani.

He should employ kindness and discretion toward the novices.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[June, 1755].

I beg you to treat Manfredonia with great kindness. He must remain in the novitiate like a novice; but he must accuse himself with the other professed. Tell him that he is a member of the Congregation, because this is a sore temptation to him. Endeavor to encourage him.

Now that the hot weather is coming, moderate the exercises of the novices; let them go out often, and diminish their application; for we see how all become ill. Let them gradually copy the exercises of the missions, and see to it that they learn by heart at least two or three exhortations.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After a copy contained in the process of the Curia of Sant' Agata for the beatification of the servant of God, pp. 1321 and 1326.

[1] The reader will not be displeased to see repeated here a Letter already published in *General Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 291. There we gave it as it is found in the Roman edition, without date or the name of the person to whom it was sent. Having found it later on, as also Letter 205 (*General Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 373), in the process for the beatification, among the depositions of Father Picone, to whom it was really sent, we give it here, as it throws light upon Letters 153, 205, andalso 204. All three treat of Francesco Antonio Manfredonia. This man, who had made profession, July 1,

LETTER 2.

To a Young Father of the Congregation.

He recommends the daily study of Moral Theology.[1]

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

[1755].

I have received your letter, and I give you my blessing. I would request you for the future to devote at least a half hour daily to the study of Moral Theology, when you are

1754, after three months lost the grace of vocation, and having sought in vain for a dispensation from his vows (see Letters 184, 185, 186, *General Correspondence*, vol. i. pp. 346–9), went to the extreme of running away from the Congregation. The saint, however, remained firm in refusing the dispensation which he had repeatedly asked for, and after six months Manfredonia found himself obliged in conscience to return to our house at Pagani where the saint resided. It is in allusion to this fact that the saint writes to Father Picone (Letter 204): "Francesco Antonio is coming etc.," and a few days later the present letter. But as D. Francesco Antonio, to quote the deposition of Father Picone, "was in poor health, I informed the saint thereof, and in reply he wrote me: 'Certainly, grant to Manfredonia some solace etc.,'" that is, Letter 205. All this charity and kindness, however, were unavailing, and Manfredonia was finally dismissed from the Congregation as incorrigible.

[1] To understand the solicitude of the saint that all the Fathers, and particularly the younger ones, should possess the most complete knowledge of Moral Theology, a science so necessary to the missionary, it will be worth while to cite the deposition of Father Picone in the process of beatification. "To educate our students," these are his words, "according to the spirit of the Institute, the servant of God himself taught our young men Moral Theology, and conducted the academies of Cases of Conscience, which he desired should always be maintained in our houses. He had made me Master of Novices. But in a letter to me he wrote as follows: 'I would not wish that on account of the novitiate you should neglect Moral Theology, especially as you have not completed your studies therein. The novices, it is true, are many, yet a quarter of an hour is not so much.' And then he adds: 'Remind Father Basil to attend the academy with Father Caproli.'"

not occupied with missions. I recommend to you particularly the new *Moral*,[1] which contains many new things, especially *de restitutione*, *de pœnitentia*, *de matrimonio*.

Once more I bless you. Remember me every morning at holy Mass. Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa!

BROTHER ALFONSO,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

LETTER 3.

To Father Antonio Tannoia, at Iliceto.

Two cases of Moral Theology.

[Year uncertain].

Live Jesus!

I cannot find in my *Moral Theology* the encyclical of Benedict XIV., which led me to say that one who is a stranger in a diocese cannot be absolved from cases that are reserved in his own. What I do say in my book is, that a stranger who has fallen under a reserved case in his home, cannot be absolved except by a confessor who, in the place where the stranger goes to confession, has the power to absolve from reserved cases.

With regard to the man who has deposed against us, I, too, am of the opinion that he should not be forced to make any retraction. In order to absolve him, it will suffice that he is ready to tell the truth when called upon by us to do so, and that for the present he gives permission to all our Fathers to demand such retraction when it shall be necessary. Meanwhile keep the affair a profound secret; for should anything about it become known, this man might rise up against us anew.

I bless your Reverence and all.

BROTHER ALFONSO MARIA.

[1] He alludes to the second edition of the *Moral*, which had appeared a short time before.

[*P. S.*] I speak of the case of the stranger in the *Moral Theology*, *lib. vi. de Sacram. Pœnit.* n. 588, 589; but no mention is made there of the encyclical of Benedict XIV. If I have spoken of it elsewhere, write to me indicating the place.

After an old copy.

LETTER 4.

To the Sovereign Pontiff Clement XIII.[1]

He requests the Apostolic Benediction for the Congregation, of which he gives an account to the Pope, and presents him with some of his works.

Monastery of St. Michael, NOCERA, October 24, 1758.

Most Holy Father: Prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness with all my companions of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I most humbly implore your apostolic benediction.

The end of our little Congregation which was approved by the Holy See in 1749, is to evangelize by means of missions the poor abandoned people of the country. During nine months of the year our Fathers are occupied going around preaching missions in the mountainous districts and country places which are most in need of spiritual assistance. The Congregation began in 1732, with the blessing of the bishops. At first we had only a few subjects; now, by the grace of Jesus Christ, we number nearly one hundred, lay-brothers not included. Perfect community life is observed throughout, for we take the vow of poverty, the vow renouncing all ecclesiastical benefices and dignities, and the vow of perseverance. We have five houses in different dio-

[1] At the top of this Letter, Clement XIII. wrote with his own hand: "Answered, December 10, 1758."

ceses, namely, in Salerno, Nocera, Conza, Bovino, and Benevento. In the last-named we have recently made a new foundation at Sant' Angelo, a place subject to the dominion of Your Holiness. Every year from forty to fifty missions are given. In this manner we have already visited six of the provinces of the kingdom. Besides the missions, which are conducted abroad, the spiritual exercises are given at our houses about twenty or thirty times a year for seculars, candidates for ordination, and priests.

I take the liberty to send to Your Holiness some little spiritual works of mine, together with some larger ones on Moral Theology, which, though composed by me for the instruction of our students, have been well received by the public and have passed through many editions. Place them, I pray you, in some out of the way corner of your library.

Deign, most Holy Father, to accept the sentiments of homage and filial affection that we entertain toward your person with whose excellent qualities we are fully acquainted.

Meanwhile we beseech you to bless us all as our Father, that we may be able ever to devote ourselves more and more to the promotion of God's glory and the salvation of so many poor souls who live in almost utter destitution in the rural districts.

Humbly prostrate before your throne, I remain

Your most humble, devoted, and obedient servant,

ALFONSO DE' LIGUORI,
of the Most Holy Redeemer.

After the original in the possesion of Mgr. Antonio Tessarin, parish priest of Santa Maria *dei Frari*, in Venice.

LETTER 5.

To Giambattista Remondini.

He requests the publisher to send him certain printed folios to which he attaches great importance. He asks, also, for copies of the *Apology*.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

SANT' AGATA, May 3, 1765.

Most Illustrious Sir: A number of weeks have elapsed since I had a letter from you. I was particularly anxious to receive the fifty copies of the *Dedications*, as also the other folios of Father Patuzzi's work, only one, the first, having reached me; thus far, however, not a single sheet has appeared. I am afraid, they have been lost *en route*, as has happened more than once in the course of our correspondence. Please, then, send me these works once more, at least the folios of the second reply of Patuzzi.

I am continually importuned with requests from Rome and Sicily for the *Apology*, but the *Apologies* never appear, in fact, there is no news of them. I beg you to send them to me, if you have the opportunity.

I remain, Illustrious Sir,

Your very devoted and grateful servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After the original preserved in the archives of Father General at Rome.

LETTER 6.

To Father Angelo Maione, at Naples.

Solicitude of the saint for a sick brother. Various charges.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

ARIENZO, August 22, 1771.

I have learned that Brother Francesco [Tartaglione] is afflicted with a hernia. Have some person of experience in such matters examine him at my expense; for in troubles of this kind such people are preferable to book-physicians. I think you will be able to find some one in the vicinity of the castle. I have myself suffered much and still suffer from hernia. Therefore do I say that first of all it is necessary to reduce the hernia little by little and without violence. It is well also to soothe the part affected with salve. Several times I have been afflicted from this cause and suffered great pain, but have always been relieved in this way. When the reduction has been effected, a truss must be applied to keep the parts in place. This, however, should not be of wood, which is quite useless, as I know from experience, but of cloth, which adapts itself more easily and fits better. I have used such a truss now for a long time with advantage. It is necessary to keep it pretty tight,—I do not mean at night when one is lying down, but whenever one is going about or standing.

I think, moreover, that Brother Francesco will go to Nocera and remain there for some time. See, therefore, that he turns over to you all the money he has, which you will then keep, for I do not wish any Brother to take care of it, as we cannot trust everybody. See, too, that the accounts of the revenues of Carmignano, and of the College [of Doctors] are handed over to you, also the bills of the printer and of the paper-dealer.

This indisposition of Brother Francesco pains me deeply, but we must do God's holy will. I therefore ask you to

give me a detailed account of what the doctors say concerning his case, for D. Salvatore could not give me very clear information. Should the Brother be obliged to go to Nocera, I beseech you to make yourself acquainted with everything pertaining to his work at Naples, that you may be able to instruct the Brother who will succeed him. Tell me, also, what Brother seems to you most capable of taking Brother Francesco's place, should he be unable to continue in it.

Find out also what books are preserved in the house, so that you may know at least where the principal ones are kept, namely, *Homo Apostolicus*, *The Truth of Faith*, *The Council of Trent*, *Way of Salvation*. *Love of Jesus Christ*, *Spouse of Christ*, *Exercises for Priests*, *etc.* I think the book-binder, Girolamo Cuomo, who they tell me is very methodical in his business affairs, knows all about these works, for he is to get them for binding when they are needed.

What is of the utmost importance, however, is that you are well instructed with regard to the revenues of Carmignano, and more particularly of the College; for these may easily be lost if attention is not given to them. An agreement was made in virtue of which the porter of the College was to receive a *carlino* a month if he came to notify us when promotions were made, so that we might go to the College and claim our fees. Before this arrangement we suffered some losses in this respect, because we had taken no precautions.

I pray you to let me have an answer on all these points.

I have told the Brother here to send you twenty-five *rotoli* of grain, which you will receive only next week, as it has to come from Sant' Agata.

I bless you.

BROTHER ALFONSO MARIA,

After the Roman original.

LETTER 7.

To D. Liborio Carfora, Rural Dean of Santa Maria a Vico. [1]

Orders for the removal of a grave scandal.

ARIENZO, July 19, 1775.

Since that wicked priest has begun again to act in the manner you mention, your Reverence should obtain information concerning him in the vicinity.

Those women cannot be sent away unless it can be proved that they are leading bad lives. With regard to the priest, tell him to repair hither without delay.

I bless you and remain

Ever your devoted servant,

ALFONSO MARIA,
Bishop of Sant' Agata.

After a copy contained in the apostolic process of Sant' Agata, p. 720,

[1] He was subsequently promoted to the dignity of *primicerius* of the cathedral of Sant' Agata.

LETTER 8.

To a Religious.

On the Manner of Preaching.

Live Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

I have received your esteemed letter, in which you say that what I have written in the *Selva*, or Collection of Materials,[1] for the spiritual exercises of priests, on the style to be employed in sermons preached for congregations consisting both of the illiterate and the learned, has been criticised by a distinguished literary character. In the *Selva* I have asserted that the style of all sermons preached before the ignorant and the learned should be simple and popular. My critic, you say, maintains that, though sacred orators should preach in a clear and orderly manner, they should never condescend to speak in a popular style; because, according to him, such a style is unworthy of the dignity of the pulpit and degrading to the word of God. This proposition has astonished me; but to speak with the sincerity of a friend, what you have added has scandalized me. The objections of my critic, you say, appear somewhat reasonable to you, because a sermon should have all the properties of a discourse, and it is admitted that one of the most essential is to delight the audience; and therefore, when the audience consists both of the ignorant and the learned, the sacred orator should not, by a low, popular style, disgust the latter, who are the respectable part of his hearers, but should speak in a manner calculated to please and delight them.

Now to explain fully my sentiments on this point, which I shall show are the sentiments of all wise and pious men,

[1] *Dignity and Duties of the Priest, or Selva*, vol. xii. p. 265.

and to answer every objection that can be proposed against my opinion, it will be necessary to repeat much of what has been already written in the *Selva.*

It cannot be doubted that by preaching the world has been converted from paganism to the faith of Jesus Christ. *How*, says the Apostle, *shall they hear without a preacher? Faith then cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*[1] As the faith has been propagated, so it has been preserved by preaching, and so are Christians induced by preaching to live according to the maxims of the Gospel: for it is not enough for the faithful to know what they must do in order to be saved; it is, moreover, necessary for them, by hearing the word of God, to be reminded of the eternal truths and of their obligations, and also to adopt the means of obtaining eternal life. Hence St. Paul commanded Timothy continually to instruct and admonish the flock committed to his care: *Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine.*[2] Hence also the Lord addressed the same command to the prophet Isaias: *Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew My people their wicked doings.*[3] And again he said to Jeremias, *Behold I have given My words in thy mouth: Lo, I have set thee this day over the nations, and over kingdoms, to root up, and to destroy*, etc.[4] Jesus Christ has imposed the same obligation on his apostles, and through them on all priests who are called to

1 "Quomodo autem audient sine prædicante? . . . Ergo fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi."—*Rom.* x. 14–17.

2 "Prædica verbum, insta opportune, importune, argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientia et doctrina."—2 *Tim.* iv. 2.

3 "Clama, ne cesses, quasi tuba exalta vocem tuam, et annuntia populo meo peccata eorum."—*Isa.* lviii. 1.

4 "Ecce dedi verba mea in ore tuo; ecce constituti te hodie super gentes et super regna, ut evellas, et destruas, etc, etc."—*Jer.* i. 9.

the office of preaching. *Going therefore, teach ye all nations: . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*[1] And if, through the fault of those who are bound to announce the divine word, a sinner perish, God will demand an account of his soul at their hands. *If, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand.*[2]

But let us come to the point. My proposition is that, when the audience is composed of the learned and of the ignorant, the style of the sermon (I do not here speak of funeral orations or of panegyrics—of these I shall say something hereafter) should be simple and popular. This proposition is not mine only: it is that of the celebrated Louis Muratori, who is regarded as one of the first literary characters of the day. It cannot be said that such a man censured a lofty and polished style because he was but little acquainted with it; for the whole world knows that he was a man of great genius, and of extraordinary literary acquirements. In his golden book on *Popular Eloquence*, which is in the hands of every one, he asserts, and proves most learnedly, the proposition that I have laid down.

But, to confirm my assertion, I shall take many reflections from other authors, and particularly from the holy Fathers; and I entreat you, and every one into whose hands this book shall fall, to read the whole of it; for it contains a great deal of matter most useful for those who are engaged in preaching, and are desirous of gaining souls to Jesus Christ. St. Basil says: "The sacred school

[1] Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes; servare omnia quæcumque mandavi vobis."—*Matt.* xxviii. 19, 20.

[2] "Si, dicente me ad impium: Morte morieris; non annuntiaveris ei . . , ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram."—*Ezech.* iii. 18.

does not follow the precepts of the rhetoricians."[1] The saint does not mean to say that the sacred orator should not employ the art of rhetoric in his sermons, but that he should not imitate the empty eloquence of the ancient rhetoricians, who in their orations sought only their own glory. It is not denied that we should avail ourselves of the rules of rhetoric in all our sermons. But what, I ask, is the principal end that every preacher should propose to himself in using the art of oratory? Certainly he should have no other in view than to persuade and to induce the people to practise what he preaches. Such is the doctrine of the learned Marquis Orsi, who, in a letter to Father Platina, says: "Let eloquence be employed to move rather than to delight; for to move is the same thing as to persuade, which is the only object of the art." In his work on *Popular Eloquence*, Muratori says that "rhetoric is necessary, not to fill sermons with flowers, but to teach the method of persuading and of moving." I shall occasionally take passages from this book; because the opinions of so great a man cannot, like mine, be treated with contempt. In his life of the younger Father Segneri he says: "Good rhetoric is nothing else than a perfect imitation of the natural and popular method of reasoning with others, and of persuading, everything superfluous being removed. The more the reasoning of the sacred orator is natural and intelligible,—not to the few men of learning who may be present, but to the people to whom he speaks,—the more effective will be his eloquence." Speaking of the style to be adopted by the preacher of the divine word, St. Augustine says: "Let him try as much as possible to be understood, and to be listened to with docility."[2] St.

[1] "Sacra schola præcepta rhetorum non sequitur."—*In Gordium Mart.*

[2] "Aget quantum potest ut intelligatur, et obedienter audiatur."—*De Doct. Christ.* l. 4, c. 15, n. 32.

Thomas says, "that the preacher whose principal object is to show his eloquence, does not so much intend to induce the people to practise what he teaches, as to imitate himself in the elegance of his language." [1]

The language of sermons preached before mixed congregations should be so plain and simple that the audience may clearly understand all that is said, and may be moved to practise all that is taught. Hence the preacher should avoid two things: *loftiness of thought and superfluous elegance of language.*

I.—With regard to the first, would to God that Superiors would imitate the example of St. Philip Neri. It is related in his life that he commanded those who gave instructions to the people to speak on subjects that are useful and popular, and never to enter into scholastic questions, or to seek after sublime conceptions. Hence when he heard the members of his Congregation introduce subjects that were too subtle or curious, he made them descend from the pulpit, even though they were in the middle of the sermon. Finally, he exhorted all to employ their eloquence in showing, in a plain and easy style, the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice. Of some preachers we may say, with the prophet Isaias, *Who are these that fly as clouds?* [2] And as lofty clouds seldom forebode rain, so, from the sermons of those who preach in a lofty style it cannot be hoped that the waters of salvation will ever flow. Hence the holy Council of Trent has commanded all parish priests to preach in a style accommodated to the capacity of their flock. "Archpriests, . . . either personally, or by others who are competent, shall feed the people committed to them with

1 "Qui eloquentiæ principaliter studet, homines non intendit inducere ad imitationem eorum quæ dicit, sed dicentis."—*Opusc.* cap. xix. 19.

2 "Qui sunt isti, qui ut nubes volant?"—*Is.* lx. 8.

wholesome words, according to their own capacity."[1] Hence also the celebrated Muratori wisely observes: "The preacher must speak to the people in the language in which a man of learning would endeavor to persuade a peasant, and thus he will make an impression on the learned as well as on the ignorant."

Except, says St. Paul, *you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? For you shall be speaking unto the air.*[2] Hence, according to the Apostle, those who preach in language not easily understood by the people, only speak to the air. But, alas! how many preachers are there that labor hard, through a miserable desire of acquiring the praises of their hearers, to fill their sermons with sublime conceptions and subtle thoughts, unintelligible to the people, and recite their discourses in the tone and manner of a comedian? What fruit can such preachers expect from their instructions? Louis of Granada says that the ruin of the world is to be ascribed to this crying evil, that the greater number of preachers seek applause rather than the glory of God and the salvation of souls.[3] Would to God it were not too true! And Father John d'Avila, in one of his letters, in which he describes the miseries and iniquities of the world, says: "There is no remedy for so great an evil, principally on account of the preachers, who are the medicine of these wounds; but such dangerous diseases are not cured by the soft lenitives of polished and delicate discourses—they require strokes of fire." One would

[1] "Archypresbyteri, etc., per se, vel alios idoneos, plebes sibi commissas pro earum capacitate pascent salutaribus verbis."—*Sess.* 5, *de Ref.* c. ii.

[2] Nisi manifestum sermonem dederitis, quomodo scietur id quod dicitur? eritis enim in aera loquentes."—1 *Cor.* xiv. 9.

[3] "Maxima prædicatorum turba majorem nominis sui celebrandi quam divinæ gloriæ et salutis humanæ procurandæ curam habent."—*Eccl. Rhet.* l. 1, c. 6.

imagine that some of those lofty preachers study to make themselves unintelligible, or rather, as Muratori says, that they are ashamed to speak in language that all can understand. *The little ones*, says the prophet Jeremias, *have asked for bread, and there was no one to break it unto them.* [1] In his comment on this passage, St. Bonaventure says,[2] that the bread of the divine word is not to be divided in a manner calculated to indulge curiosity, but must be broken in small pieces on which the little ones may feast. What profit can the poor and illiterate derive from sublime conceptions, from irrelevant erudition, or from long descriptions of a tempest or of a pleasant garden, the study of which has cost the preacher a week's labor, though the entire discourse does not last longer than a quarter of an hour?

And here let it be observed that lofty thoughts and ingenious reflections, or facts of a curious and distracting nature, though they may please the learned, still injure the effect of the sermon; for, as Muratori well observes, he that understands them dwells with delight on the sublimity of the thoughts or on the novelty of the facts, and does not attend to his own spiritual profit: thus the will is not affected, and no fruit is produced.

It was not in a lofty style that St. Paul preached to the Corinthians: *And I, brethren, when I came to you, I came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of Christ; for I judged not myself to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[3] I, brethren, in preaching to you, have not had recourse to

1 "Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis."—*Lam.* iv. 4.

2 "Panis frangendus, non curiose scindendus."

3 "Et ego, cum venissem ad vos, fratres, veni non in sublimitate sermonis aut sapientiæ, annuntians vobis testimonium Christi. Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum."—1 *Cor.* ii. 1.

sublime discourses, or to human wisdom: I have desired only to know Jesus Christ crucified; that is, that all our hope and our salvation consists in imitating his sorrows and his ignominies. The sentiments of Natalis Alexander on this passage of St. Paul are worthy of attention: "It is not to be wondered at that most preachers produce no fruit, since they make their preaching consist in the artifices of secular eloquence, in measured periods, in excessive ornament of words and flights of human reason. They do not preach the Gospel, but their own inventions; they know not Jesus crucified, but propose to themselves the imitation of academic orators rather than that of the apostles and of apostolic men. To a simplicity of language that is not altogether deprived of Christian eloquence, but adorned with a natural beauty and unaffected, there should be joined humility on the part of the preacher. Let him fear lest by pride, and by the captivation of human glory and applause, and by the ostentation of eloquence he may hinder the work of God. The fewer, continues the learned author, the ornaments of secular eloquence the preacher employs, and the less his confidence in human means, the more fruitful will his sermons be in converting sinners."[1]

The learned and celebrated missionary, Father Jerome Sparano, of the venerable Congregation of the Pious

[1] "Quid mirum, si nullum fructum faciunt plerique qui prædicationem in eloquentiæ sæcularis artificio, in periodorum commensuratione, in verborum lenociniis humanæque rationis excursibus collocant. Evangelium non docent, sed inventa sua, Jesum crucifixum nesciunt, academicos oratores lubentius sibi proponunt imitandos quam apostolos et apostolicos viros. Simplicitatem sermonis, non penitus christiana destitutam eloquentia, naturali decore ornatam, non fucatam, comitetur humilitas concionatoris. Timeat ne superbia sua gloriæ humanæ plaususque captatione, ac ostentatione eloquentiæ Dei opus impediat. Quo major ejus humilitas, quo minor in mediis humanis fiducia, minor eloquentiæ secularis affectatio, eo major spiritui et virtuti Dei ad conversionem animarum locus datur."

Workers, used to compare those who preach in a lofty and florid style to artificial fireworks, which, while they last, make a great noise, but leave after them only a little smoke. St. Teresa[1] then had just reason to say that the sacred orator who preaches himself does great injury to the Church. "The apostles," she would say, "though few, have converted the world; because they preached with simplicity and with the true spirit of God, and now so many preachers produce but little fruit." And why? "Because," says the saint, "the preachers of the present time have too much of human wisdom and human respect, and therefore few only of their hearers give up the habits of vice." St. Thomas of Villanova says: "Many preachers there are, but few that preach as they should."[2] Philip Neri used to say: "Give me ten priests with the true spirit of the apostles, and I will convert the whole world."

By the mouth of the prophet Jeremias the Lord asks: *Why then is not the wound of the daughter of My people healed?*[3] In his exposition of this passage St. Jerome answers: "Because there are not priests to apply the necessary remedy."[4] Speaking of preachers who adulterate his word, the Lord says, in another place: *If they had stood in My counsel and had made My words known to My people, I should have turned them from their evil way and their wicked doings.*[5] "They would," says Cardinal Hugo, commenting on this passage, "have made known My words,

[1] *Life*, ch. xvi.

[2] "Multi prædicatores, sed pauci qui prædicant ut oportet."—*In die Pentec., conc.* 2.

[3] "Quare igitur non est obducta cicatrix filiæ populi mei?"—*Jer.* viii. 2.

[4] "Eo quod non sunt sacerdotes, quorum debeant curari medicamine."

[5] "Si stetissent in consilio meo, et nota fecissent verba mea populo meo, avertissem utique eos a via sua mala."—*Jer.* xxiii. 22.

not their own." Preachers who speak not in simple language, preach not the word of God, but their own; and therefore, says the Lord, sinners remain in their wicked ways. O God! what an abuse is it to see sometimes religious, even of the reformed Orders, who, from their penitential garments, and from the appearance of their mortified lives, seem to breathe zeal and sanctity, and from whom the people expect to hear sentiments and words burning with divine love; what an abuse, I say, is it to see such religious ascend the pulpit, and deliver a discourse which is only a collection of ingenious thoughts, of descriptions, of antitheses and of other such trifles, of inflated language and rounded periods, which the hearers scarcely understand, and from which they derive no benefit! What a pity to see so many of the poor come to learn the means of saving their souls, and obliged, after listening to the preacher for more than an hour, to go away without having understood any part of the sermon! They return home as ignorant as before, and full of discontent at having spent so much time in attending to a discourse which they could not understand.

Those orators who preach themselves, and are not understood by their audience, sometimes say: "The people were all attentive to the discourse." I also say that the people were attentive; they wished to understand the discourse, but have they understood it? Muratori says that he had seen the poor listen with open mouths to panegyrics, of which they scarcely understood a single word. Hence it happens, that, having found by experience that they do not understand the discourses preached in the Church, they become disgusted with religious discourses, they cease to attend them, and thus become more and more obstinate in vice. Justly, then, has Father Gaspar Sanches called those who do not preach in a simple style the greatest persecutors of the Church; for, in reality, there cannot be a greater per-

secution or evil that can befall the people than the adulteration of the word of God; for, when mixed up with flowers and trifles, it is either not understood, or it is at least deprived of its efficacy; so that it cannot give to the people the light and help which they might receive from it.

II.—Secondly, the preacher should employ *words that are in common use*, and should avoid those which are not understood by the illiterate. Preachers of long standing and of high character must be particularly careful to use language easily understood by the people; for, should they speak in a polished style, young preachers, being naturally desirous of applause, will study to imitate them. Thus the abuse will be more widely extended, and the poor will be deprived of the fruit of the word of God. St. Jerome compares vain preachers, who employ only sounding and polished words, to women who by their vain ornaments please men, but do not please God.[1]

But Father Bandiera, in the preface of his *Gerotricamerone*, controverts the opinion of those who maintain that in sermons a selection of words and careful attention to the collocation necessary for elegant diction, do not edify the people, but, on the contrary, destroy the simplicity suited to spiritual subjects, and take up the preacher's time in the study of empty words. He asserts that ornaments of style throw a splendor round spiritual subjects, such as the maxims of faith, the beauty of virtue, and the deformity of vice. He says that the holy Fathers employed these ornaments, and that without their aid the word of God cannot be preached with dignity from the pulpit. He also adds that some persons censure select language as unsuited and injurious to devotion, because they themselves have not a

[1] Effeminatæ quippe sunt eorum magistrorum animæ qui semper sonantia componunt, et nihil virile, nihil Deo dignum est in iis,"—*In Ezech. hom.* 3.

command of polished expression. To remove every erroneous impression that might be made on the minds of his readers I shall answer his arguments and refute his assertions.

First; I cannot conceive what could have induced Father Bandiera to give expression in his preface to sentiments so unreasonable; for in the body of his work he says that, when the greater part of the audience consists of the poor, the style of the sermon should be easy and simple, and that sometimes it should be low, when otherwise the hearers would not derive profit from the discourse. He also says that the style of academic discourses is very different from that of sermons. He adds that preachers who, in their instructions, would adopt the style of his own work, would act improperly. He then agrees in opinion with us, that, when the greater part of the audience is composed of the illiterate, the style of the sermon must, if the preacher wishes to produce fruit, be simple, and be accommodated to the capacity of the hearers. What, then, has induced him to assert that the dignity of the divine word, delivered from the pulpit, requires the ornaments of style, and that those ornaments give splendor to spiritual things; or that some writers, because they themselves have not a command of language, censure, as injurious to devotion, a nice selection of words?

Let us now come to the refutation of the assertions of Father Bandiera: his opinion should be received with caution, for, being an eminent professor of the Tuscan language, he may have been induced to adopt it by too great an attachment to eloquence of expression. He says that "it is necessary to give splendor to spiritual subjects." Such is not the language of St. Ambrose. This Father says that Christian preaching stands not in need of the pomp or elegance of words, and that therefore ignorant fishermen were

chosen by the Lord to preach the Gospel, and to sow the word of God pure and unadulterated.[1]

Natalis Alexander answers Father Bandiera, and says that the word of God requires not affected and flowery ornaments, since it is adorned by the natural beauty which it contains in itself; and therefore the more simply it is expounded, the more luminous and splendid it appears. The words of the same author, which have been already quoted, are so appropriate, that I shall repeat them in this place: "To a simplicity of language that is not altogether deprived of Christian eloquence, but adorned with a natural beauty and unaffected, there should be joined humility on the part of the preacher. . . . The fewer the ornaments of secular eloquence the preacher employs, and the less his confidence in human means, the more fruitful will his sermons be in converting sinners." [2] Thus the more purely and nakedly the word of God is preached, the more forcibly it strikes the hearts of the hearers; for, according to the Apostle, it is in itself living and effective; so that it is more piercing than a two-edged sword.[3] And God himself, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremias, has declared that his word is a fire which inflames, and a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces—that is, the most hardened hearts: *Are not My words as a fire, saith the Lord: and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?* [4]

[1] "Prædicatio christiana non indiget pompa et cultu sermonis; ideoque piscatores, homines imperiti, electi sunt qui evangelizarent."—*In* 1 *Cor.* 1.

[2] "Simplicitatem sermonis non penitus christiana destitutam eloquentia naturali decore ornatam, non fucatam, comitetur humilitas concionatoris. . . . Quo minor in mediis humanis fiducia, minor eloquentiæ sæcularis affectatio, eo major spiritui et virtuti Dei ad conversionem animarum locus datur."

[3] "Vivus est sermo Dei, et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti."—*Heb.* iv. 12.

[4] "Numquid non verba mea quasi ignis, dicit Dominus, et quasi malleus conterens petram?"—*Jer.* xxiii. 29.

Let us examine the sentiments of the author of the *Imperfect Work* on this subject. "The word of God," he says, "though simple and popular, is in itself living, and gives life to those who hear it, because it contains in itself the truth of God, which persuades and moves the hearts of men; but human language, though polished and select, is, for want of God's co-operation, dead, and therefore produces no fruit." [1] The learned Mansi says that when it is naked and divested of ornament, the word of God strikes the heart, but adorned with flowers, it is like a sword within its scabbard—it cannot cut.[2]

Father Bandiera asserts that the holy Fathers have in their writings employed the ornaments of style. In answer I say, that we have not heard the sermons of these Fathers, nor are we acquainted with their style of preaching. We only read their written discourses, and we know that sermons which were preached in a simple and popular style are usually polished before they are committed to writing or given to the public. This remark has been made by the celebrated Muratori. "It is true," he says, "that St. Ambrose very frequently spoke in an abstruse manner; but we have not the sermons which he preached to the people." He reduced to treatises the discourses delivered from the pulpit, and added to them various ornaments, so that the original form of his popular instructions has disappeared. But Muratori says that, in their sermons to the people, the most

1 "Omnia verba divina quamvis rustica sint et incomposita, viva sunt, quoniam intus habent veritatem Dei et ideo vivificant audientem. Omnia autem verba sæcularia quoniam non habent in se virtutem Dei quamvis sint composita et ingeniosa, mortua sunt; propterea nec audientem salvant."—*Hom.* 46.

2 "Sicut gladius ferire nequit, nisi si nudus; nam intra vaginam constitutus quantumvis sit acutus non vulnerabit: ita verbum Dei, ut impiorum corda vulneret, nundum esse debet, sine figurarum ornamento, aut vanæ eloquentiæ floribus."—*Biblioth. mor.* tr. 83, d. 11.

celebrated Fathers of the Church, namely, St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory the Great, St. Maximus, and St. Gaudentius, preferred popular to sublime eloquence; and this is evident, as well from the sermons as from the other works of these saints. Let us hear how St. John Chrysostom speaks of sermons embellished with pompous words and well-turned periods: "We seek by those words and beautiful compositions to delight our neighbors. We try to be admired, but we are not anxious to heal their diseases."[1] And he adds that the preacher who studies to delight others and to attract admiration by elegant compositions, should be denominated "Miserable and unhappy traitor."[2] St. Augustine says: "We do not make use of high-sounding and poetical words of secular eloquence, but we preach Christ crucified."[3]

Father John d'Avila used to say, that every preacher should ascend the pulpit with a thirst for the salvation of souls, which would make him endeavor and hope, with the divine aid, to gain to God the souls of all his hearers. Hence St. Gregory says that the sacred orator should descend to the level, and should accomodate his language to the weak understanding of the people.[4] This is the doctrine of Muratori, who says that every one who preaches to the illiterate "ought to imagine that he is one of them, and that he

[1] "Hæc nos patimur, verborum fucos conquærentes, et compositionem elegantem, ut delectemus proximum. Consideramus quomodo videamur admirabiles, non quomodo morbos componamus."—*Hom.* 33, *ad pop.*

[2] "Miser et infelix proditor."—*Ad pop. ant hom.* 33.

[3] "Non nos tonantia et poetica verba proferimus nec eloquentia utimur sæculari sermone fucata, sed prædicamus Christum crucifixum."

[4] "Debet ad infirmitatem audientium semetipsum contrahendo descendere, ne dum parvis sublimia, et idcirco non profutura loquitur, magis curet se ostendere quam auditoribus prodesse."—*Mor.* l. 20, c. 1.

wishes to teach and convince them of some truth." And therefore he says he is bound to adopt the most popular and lowest kind of eloquence, and to proportion his language to their gross understanding, by speaking to them in a familiar manner, using short sentences, and sometimes even proposing questions and giving the answers. The merit of such sermons consists in employing the language and figures which usually make an impression in common conversation.

St. Gregory deemed it unworthy of a preacher of the Gospel to confine himself to the rules of grammar, and therefore he says that in his sermons he frequently exposed himself to the imputation of ignorance, by uttering even barbarisms.[1] In his exposition of the words of David, *My bone is not hid from Thee, which Thou hast made in secret*,[2] St. Augustine, knowing that the word *os* signified either the mouth or a bone, used the barbarous word *ossum* to express the meaning of the prophet; for he preferred to be censured by grammarians rather than to be unintelligible to the people.[3] Such was the contempt of the saints for elegance of style when they spoke to the people. In the fourth book on the *Christian Doctrine*, the same Father says that the preacher should not be the servant of his words, and thus expose himself to the danger of not being understood; but he should employ the language best calculated to convey his meaning and to persuade his hearers.[4] It is in this manner that, as

[1] "Non barbarismi confusionem devito, etiam præpositionum casus servare contemno, quia indignum existimo ut verba cœlestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati."—*Ep. ad Leandr. in Expos. l. Job.*

[2] "Non est occultatum os meum a te, quod fecisti in occulto."—*Ps.* cxxxviii. 15.

[3] "Habeo in abscondito quoddam *ossum*. Sic potius loquamur, melius est ut reprehendant nos grammatici quam non intelligant populi."—*In Ps.* 138, n. 20.

[4] "In ipso sermone malit (concionator) placere rebus magis quam verbis, nec doctor verbis serviat, sed verba doctori."

the prophet says, "bread is broken to the little ones." *The little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them.*[1] Hence the sermons of the missions and of the spiritual exercises produce so much fruit, because in them the bread of the divine word is minutely broken to the people.

III.—I may be asked: Do you mean that all sermons should be composed in the same style as the sermons for the missions? In answer, I in the first place ask: What is understood by sermons for the missions? Is it a discourse composed of vulgar expressions, without order and without method? No: vulgar phrases are not necessary; they are not becoming even in familiar instructions, much less in sermons. Order is indispensable in all sermons. The art of oratory, and the occasional use of tropes and figures, are also necessary; and therefore you must have observed that, in the third part of the *Selva*,[2] speaking of the style of preaching to be adopted in the missions, I have given a comprehensive abstract of rhetoric, for the instruction of the young men of our Congregation. But the rules of rhetoric are, as Muratori says, suited even to popular eloquence, provided the preacher employ them, not to win applause, but to move his hearers to lead a Christian life. The art of oratory, adds Muratori, should be used, but only in such a way that it may not be perceived by the people.

There is no doubt that the sermons prepared for the missions should be more easy and simple, and less encumbered with Latin quotations than other discourses. Some young missionaries fill their sermons with a confused medley of texts of Scripture, and long passages of the holy Fathers; but what profit can a poor illiterate peasant derive from so many

[1] "Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis."—*Lam.* iv. 4.

[2] *Preaching of God's Word*, chap. vii.

Latin quotations, which he does not understand? Texts of Scripture serve to give authority to our instructions, but only when they are few, and explained in a manner proportioned to the capacity of our audience. One text well expounded and accompanied with appropriate moral reflections, will be more profitable than many passages heaped together. An occasional passage from the holy Fathers is also very useful; but it should be short and forcible, and peculiarly applicable to the subject. Look at the sermons of that celebrated preacher, the Venerable Father Paul Segneri, and you will find that they contain few Latin passages, but a great many practical reflections and moral deductions.

The style of preaching in the missions must certainly be more simple and popular, that the poor may be persuaded and moved to virtue. The language should be plain and the periods concise, so that a person may understand any sentence without having heard or understood the preceding one, and that they who come to the church in the middle of the sermon may immediately understand what the preacher says. If the style of the sermon be close and connected, the illiterate, who have not heard the first period, will not understand the second, nor the third. Moreover, as Muratori well observes, in order to keep up the attention of the people it is necessary to make frequent use of the figure called *Antiphora*, by proposing questions and replying to them. With regard to the modulation of the voice, it is necessary to avoid the sonorous and inflated tones used in panegyric. We should also abstain from the violent efforts of the voice made by some missionaries, who expose themselves to the danger of bursting a blood-vessel, or at least of losing their voice, and at the same time disgust their audience. The best way to excite and fix the attention of the people is, to speak at one time in a loud, at another in a low, tone of voice, but without violent and sudden transitions; and at one time to

make a long exclamation, at another to pause and afterward to begin with a sigh, etc. This variety of tone and manner keeps the audience always attentive.

The act of contrition is the most important part of sermons for the missions, and therefore in such sermons it should never be omitted; for little indeed would be the fruit of the sermon if the people are not excited to compunction, or not induced to resolve on a change of life. It is to effect this object that the act of contrition is proposed to them. It is even necessary to repeat several acts of sorrow, in order to move the people to contrition, not by loud exclamations, but by solid motives and reasons. In the purpose of amendment which accompanies the act of sorrow, the preacher should, in a particular manner, recommend the people to avoid the occasions of sin, and to have recourse in their temptations to the assistance of Jesus and Mary; and should therefore, at the end of the sermon, make them ask the divine Mother to obtain some favor for them, such as the pardon of sin, the gift of perseverance, and the like. These observations are particularly applicable to sermons for the missions; but I wished to insert them in this place, because they may be useful to some of those who are devoted to the missions.

IV.—Sermons for *Lent*, or for *Sundays*, should certainly differ somewhat from those which are prepared for the missions; but, where the audience consists of the ignorant and the learned, all sermons should, as Muratori says, be simple and popular, if the preacher wishes to produce substantial fruit, and to induce the people to approach the tribunal of penance. I remember that when a celebrated missionary preached in Naples, in a simple and popular style, the churches were thronged, and the confessionals were surrounded by crowds, who, after the sermon, ran to confess their sins. Muratori says that in the small towns, and even in the churches of the cities which are frequented by the

common people, the preacher is obliged to adopt the most popular and even the lowest style, in order to accommodate himself to their gross understanding. I have seen a whole town sanctified by the Lenten sermons of those who addressed the people in simple and popular language.

Oh, what a pity to see so many Lenten sermons preached in the villages, and so little fruit! In the beginning of Lent the poor come to the sermons, but finding that they do not understand the preacher, and consequently derive no fruit from his instructions, they cease to frequent the church. If those who preach in the villages, will not consent to change the discourses which they have already composed in an elevated style, I would entreat them at least, toward the last weeks of Lent, after the people return from work, to give the spiritual exercises in the manner in which they are given during the missions. The laboring poor cannot, particularly on working days, attend in the mornings at the hour at which the sermon is usually preached. I assure these preachers that they will reap more fruit from the spiritual exercises conducted in simple language, than from a hundred Lenten sermons. Some will excuse themselves from giving these exercises, saying that they are preachers, and not missionaries. Some are perhaps even ashamed to give these exercises in which a simple and popular style is indispensably necessary, lest their reputation might be injured, or lest they should be regarded as preachers of little note. But I am consoled by the conviction that not only priests, but also many religious, are accustomed during Lent to give these exercises with so much advantage to the people.

Oh, what universal benefit would flow from the Sunday sermons if preachers always addressed the people in plain and simple language! At Naples the Blessed Sacrament is exposed every day in several churches, especially in those in which the devotion of the Forty Hours is performed.

These churches are frequented by great numbers of the faithful, but particularly of the poor. How great would be the fruit of the sermons preached in these churches if the sacred orators adopted a popular style, instructing the people in the practice of the different virtues, in the practical method of preparing for Communion, in the manner of visiting the Blessed Sacrament, of making mental prayer, of attending Mass, of meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, and of performing the other exercises of devotion? But are the discourses delivered in these churches of this description? No; the style is generally high and flowery, and therefore they are but little understood by the people. Father John d'Avila being once asked for a rule for preaching, answered, that the best rule for preaching well was to love Jesus Christ fervently. The answer was most just; for the preacher who loves Jesus Christ ascends the pulpit, not to gain applause, but to gain souls to Jesus Christ. St. Thomas of Villanova used to say that to pierce the heart of sinners, to effect their conversion, darts burning with divine love are necessary. But can darts of fire proceed from the frozen heart of the preacher who seeks by his preaching to acquire a great name?

Should we then conclude from this that whoever preaches in a polished style does not love Jesus Christ? I do not mean to assert this; but I know well that the saints did not preach in that manner. In all the Lives of holy missionaries that I have read, I have not found any one of them commended because he preached in an elevated and ornate style; I find, on the contrary, those commended in a special manner who preached in a simple and popular style. Thus in truth did the holy apostle Paul teach us by his own example how to preach, saying: *My reasoning consists not in the embellishments of human eloquence, but in making the people comprehend sincerely the truths of religion.*[1] "It was the task

[1] "Et sermo meus et prædicatio mea non in persuasibilibus humanæ sapientiæ verbis sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis."—1 *Cor.* ii. 4.

of the apostles," says Cornelius à Lapide, commenting on the text just cited, "to show how their spirit manifested the spirit of the divine mysteries so that others might receive the Holy Spirit through them."[1]

It is said of St. Thomas of Aquin, by the author of his Life, that "he accommodated himself to the capacity of his audience, lowering the wings of his genius, proposing simply such reflections as served to inflame the heart rather than feed the mind. For this purpose he used only such words as were most common and familiar, being accustomed to say: 'The language of the preacher should be so clear that the meanest capacity may understand it.'"[2]

In the Life of St. Vincent Ferrer we read that the saint composed his sermons, not on the model of discourses written in select and studied language, but at the foot of the crucifix; and from this source he derived his eloquence. P. Bartoli writes as follows, in his Life of St. Ignatius of Loyola: "Where others seek to recommend the word of God by clothing it with ornaments, he, by divesting it of all such elegance, made it appear beautiful and grand; for his method was to reduce the arguments to a certain nudity which exhibited them in their true form and genuine character." And therefore the same P. Bartoli relates that the learned who heard him were wont to say: "That in his mouth the word of God had its true weight." The same practice was observed by St. Philip Neri, of whom I have already mentioned as it is written in his Life, that he prescribed to the members of his Congregation, in preaching, to treat each subject in an easy and popular manner; and when they indulged in

[1] "Hæc fuit demonstratio Apostolorum ostendere spiritum eructantem arcana divina, ita ut alii cernerent Spiritum Sanctum per os eorum loqui."

[2] "Tam apertus debet esse sermo docentis, ut ab intelligentia sua nullos, quamvis imperitos, excludat."

lofty and curious speculations he made them come down from the pulpit.

It is also mentioned of St. Francis de Sales, that when preaching he accommodated himself to the capacity of the rudest among his audience. The incident is well known which occurred to the Bishop of Belley. This prelate being invited by the saint to preach, delivered a very elegant and florid discourse, so that he received the highest applause from his auditors; but St. Francis was silent, and the prelate, surprised at this, asked him at last how he liked the sermon. The saint replied: "You pleased all but one." The Bishop of Belley was invited a second time to preach, but as he understood that his former discourse was not pleasing to the saint, because it was too highly embellished, he made the second quite simple and moral; and then St. Francis assured him that he was very much pleased with the second discourse. On another occasion he addressed to him the following words: "A sermon is excellent when the auditors retire from the church in silence, reflecting but not speaking; and instead of praising the preacher, think on the necessity they are under of amending their lives." And as the saint taught, so did he practise. The author of his Life states, that although he preached in Paris before an auditory composed of princes, bishops, and Cardinals, he always preached in a solid, simple manner, not seeking to acquire the reputation of an eloquent preacher, but to gain souls to God. In conformity with this, the same saint wrote from Paris to a religious of his Order in the following terms: "On the vigil of the Nativity I preached in presence of the Queen in the church of the Capuchins; but I assure you I did not preach better before so many princes and princesses than I do in your poor little convent at Annecy." But because the saint preached from the heart and to draw souls to God, although he preached without ornament, the fruit he pro-

duced was immense; wherefore Madame de Montpensier said, as we find it related in the Life of the saint: "Others in their sermons fly, as it were, in the air; but the Bishop of Geneva descends to his prey, and this orator of holy love suddenly besieges the heart, and makes himself master of it."

I shall relate in the sequel what the saint wrote in one of his letters, concerning the manner of preaching, and what he thought of those preachers who employ frivolous ornament in their discourses. It is mentioned in the Life of St. Vincent de Paul that in his sermons he used not only a simple, but even an humble style. Above all, he required of his brethren that they should preach to the candidates for orders in a simple and familiar manner; because it is not, he said, pomp of expression that is conducive to the salvation of souls, but simplicity and humility, which dispose the heart to receive the grace of God. And for this purpose he was accustomed to adduce the example of Jesus Christ, who, although he could have explained the mysteries of faith in a style proportioned to their sublimity, he being the wisdom of the eternal Father, nevertheless made use of familiar terms and similitudes, to accommodate himself to the capacity of the people, and to leave to us the true model of explaining the word of God. Of St. Francis Regis it is likewise written in his Life, "that he explained the truths of faith with such clearness and simplicity, that he made himself intelligible to the meanest capacity."

The case of Father Tauler, the Dominican, is also well known. He preached at first in a very lofty style, but being afterward led to embrace a more perfect life, by means of a poor man who was sent him by God as his spiritual guide, he ceased to preach for many years; but the poor man having enjoined him to resume this function, he changed his style of preaching from the sublime to the popular; and we are told that in the first sermon he preached the com-

punction of the people was so great that several swooned away in the church. We are told of Father John d'Avila, that in his sermons he used such familiar language that by some he was considered to be an ignorant person; so that once a certain individual, who was a man of letters, but of depraved morals, said to his companion, on an occasion when Father d'Avila was to preach. "Come, let us go to hear this ignoramus;" but during the sermon he was struck by the grace of God, and he totally reformed his life. Now let us hear the sentiments of this great servant of God. According to the author of his Life, he said: "If the preacher does not faithfully fulfil his office, if he is attentive rather to gratify the taste of his auditors than to touch their hearts, and seeks for fine words rather than the conversion of souls: in fine, if by loftiness of thought he preaches himself rather than Jesus Christ, he stands in imminent danger of eternal ruin; he frightfully abuses and betrays the commission confided to him." The same we find written in the Life of Father Louis Lanusa, and of Father Paul Segneri the Younger, and of other servants of God, particular mention of whom for brevity's sake I omit.

Hence we see the account that those preachers will have to render to God, who preach themselves and not Jesus Christ, as well as the Superiors who allow them to preach in this manner. For myself, once hearing a young man of our Congregation preaching in a grand and elevated style, I made him leave the pulpit in the middle of his discourse. But let them not entertain a doubt that, if they are not corrected by their Superiors, they will assuredly be chastised by God; for the preacher is bound to promote the good of each person who hears him, as in the pulpit he fulfils the office of ambassador of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle affirms of all priests: *He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, . . . He hath placed in us the word of reconciliation. . . . For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were*

exhorting by us.[1] The preacher then occupies in the pulpit the place of Jesus Christ, and speaks on the part of Jesus Christ to sinners who hear him, in order that they may return into favor with God. Now if a king, as Father John d'Avila observes in one of his letters, commissioned one of his subjects to negotiate a marriage with a lady on his behalf, and the ambassador concluded it for himself, would not such a man be a traitor? And such exactly, said Father d'Avila, is the preacher who, commissioned by God to effect the conversion of sinners, studies to procure glory for himself, and thus renders the divine word useless, by adulterating it so that it produces no fruit. And thus does St. John Chrysostom also denominate every preacher who preaches from vanity—"A miserable and unhappy traitor." [2]

The embellishment of a sermon with lofty sentiments and elaborate expressions, to gain a character for one's self, is precisely that adulteration of the word of God which the Apostle avoided; as he writes to the Corinthians: *For we are not as many, adulterating the word of God, but with sincerity, but as from God, before God, in Christ we speak.* [3] On which words St. Gregory observes, that adulterers are not desirous to have children: on the contrary, they abhor them; they propose to themselves nothing else but the gratification of their unlawful passions: such are those who do not preach to gain souls, but to acquire a name and reputation.[4]

[1] "Dedit nobis ministerium reconciliationis. . . . et posuit in nobis verbum reconciliationis. . . . Pro Christo legatione fungimur, tamquam Deo exhortante per nos."—2 *Cor.* v. 18.

[2] "Miser et infelix proditor."

[3] "Non enim sumus, sicut plurimi, adulterantes verbum Dei; sed ex sinceritate, sed sicut ex Deo, coram Deo, in Christo loquimur."—2 *Cor.* ii. 17.

[4] "Adulterari verbum Dei est ex eo, non spiritales fructus, sed adulterinos fœtus quærere laudis humanæ."—*Mor.* l. 22, c. 17.

But let preachers tremble lest God should cut them off, as he threatens by the prophet Jeremias: *Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, who steal my words every one from his neighbor.*[1] Who are they who unjustly employ the divine word? They are precisely those who make use of it only to acquire the name of great orators, robbing God of his glory to transfer it to themselves. St. Francis de Sales said that the preacher whose discourses abound in foliage, that is, curious thoughts and elegant expressions, is in danger of being cut down and consigned to the fire, like the unfruitful tree in the Gospel; whilst our Lord said to his disciples, and through them to all priests, that he had chosen them to bring forth fruit—lasting fruit. Hence Cornelius à Lapide, speaking of such orators, hesitates not to assert that they sin mortally, both because they pervert the office of preaching to their own exaltation, and also because by preaching in a lofty and elegant style they oppose an obstacle to the salvation of so many souls that would be converted if they preached in an apostolic manner.[2] The same was said by Father John d'Avila, as we have remarked above: "If the preacher does not faithfully fulfil his office," etc.

Nor does it avail such a person to say: What I principally propose is the glory of God. He who makes use of lofty and uncommon language, so as not to be understood by all, opposes an obstacle to the glory of God, by preventing the conversion of many who hear him, since, as Muratori well remarks, whoever preaches is bound to procure the salvation of each individual, be he learned or igno-

1 "Propterea ecce ego ad prophetas, ait Dominus, qui furantur verba mea: Projiciam quippe vos."—*Jer.* xxiii. 30, 33.

2 "Prædicator qui plausum quærit, non conversionem populi, hic damnabitur quia prædicationis officio, ad laudem non Dei sed suam abusus est, tum quia salutem tot animarum sibi creditam impedivit et avertit."—*In Luc.* vi. 26.

rant, as if there were no other who heard him. And if any one of them be not converted, because he could not comprehend what was said, the preacher will have to render an account, as God himself declared by the mouth of Ezechiel (this all preachers are sufficiently aware of, but in practice they attend but little to it; hence I repeat it here): *If when I say to the wicked: Thou shalt surely die; thou declare it not to him, . . . the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand.*[1] And undoubtedly it is the same not to preach the word of God, as to adulterate it by a florid style, so that it does not produce the fruit that it certainly would if it were expounded in a clear and simple manner. St. Bernard says that on the day of judgment those poor ignorant persons will appear to arraign those preachers who have lived on their bounty, but have neglected to heal, as they ought, the diseases of their souls.[2]

We should be persuaded that when the word of God is adulterated by studied elegance of expression it becomes feeble and enervated, so as not to be of any service either to the learned or unlearned. I do not assert this of myself: it is stated by St. Prosper, or, if you will, another ancient author who goes under his name.[3] And this sentiment he borrowed from St. Paul, who writes as follows: *Christ sent me . . . to preach the Gospel, not in wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.*[4] On which text St.

[1] "Si dicente me ad impium: Morte morieris: non annunt averis ei, . . . ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram." —*Ezech.* iii. 18.

[2] "Venient, venient ante tribunal Christi; ubi erit pauperum accusatio, quorum vixere stipendiis, nec diluere peccata."—*De Vita et Mor. Cler.* c. 7.

[3] "Sententiarum vivacitatem sermo cultus ex industria enervat."—*De Vita contempl.* l. 3, c. 34.

[4] "Misit me Christus . . . evangelizare, non in sapientia verbi, ut non evacuetur crux Christi."—1 *Cor.* i. 17.

John Chrysostom observes: "Some devote themselves to external wisdom: the Apostle shows that this wisdom does not only not aid the cross, but even annihilates it." [1] Lofty conceptions, then, and elaborate expressions in sermons hinder and, as it were, annihilate the spiritual profit of souls, which is the fruit of the redemption of Jesus Christ. Hence St. Augustine said: "I should not presume to employ wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ become enervated; satisfied with the authority of the divine word, I would rather serve the simplicity of the Gospel than vanity." [2]

St. Thomas of Villanova inveighs against those hearers who, whilst their souls are lost in sin, go in quest of flowery discourses. "O fool," he says, "thy house is burning, and thou expectest artificial discourse!" [3] But this reproof is better directed to those preachers who address a congregation of which probably there are many in a state of sin: these miserable souls require rather the thunder and lightning which would arouse them from their lethargy and strike them with terror, and for this purpose are required words not borrowed from the academy, but springing from the heart and from a true zeal and desire to rescue them from the hands of the enemy, and yet we would amuse them with polished phrases and sounding periods. If a house were on fire, what folly would it not be, says Father Nansi,[4] to attempt to extinguish it with a little rose-water. Thus, when I hear any one praised who preaches with studied elegance, and hear it said that his sermons have pro-

1 "Alii externæ sapientiæ operam dabant, ostendit (Apostolus) eam non solum cruci non opem ferre, sed etiam exinanire."

2 "Non præsumam unquam in sapientia verbi, ne evacuetur crux Christi; sed Scripturarum auctoritate contentus, simplicitati obedire potius studeo, quam tumori."—*Contra Felician.* c. 2.

3 "O stulte, ardet domus tua; et tu expectas compositam orationem?"

4 "*Biblioth. mor.* tr. 83, d. 42.

duced great fruit, I smile, and say: It is impossible; And why? Because I know that God does not lend his co-operation to such preaching. *My preaching*, says the Apostle, *was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in shewing of the spirit and power.*[1] "To what purpose," says Origen, commenting on the text cited above, "does all our eloquence serve if it be not animated by the spirit and virtue of divine grace?"[2] The Lord lends his aid to him who preaches his word in a plain and simple manner, without vanity, imparting a force and power to his language that moves the hearts of all who hear him. But this efficacy he does not communicate to studied and polished expression. The diction that is refined and adorned according to the dictates of human wisdom, says the Apostle, as we have before observed, enervates the divine word, and destroys the profit which might be expected from it.

Oh, what a fearful account will those priests have to render to God who preach through vanity! St. Bridget[3] saw the soul of a preacher, who was a religious, condemned to hell for having preached in this spirit; and the Lord said to the saint that he does not speak by vain preachers, but rather the devil. In discoursing one day with that great missionary, Father Sparano, mentioned above, he related to me an awful occurrence. He told me that a certain priest who preached in a polished style, being at the point of death, and feeling a great aridity and indisposition to conceive a hearty sorrow for his sins, almost despaired of his salvation; and then the Lord spoke to him from a crucifix

[1] "Predicatio mea, non in persuabilibus humanæ sapientiæ verbis, sed in ostentione spiritus et virtutis."—1 *Cor.* ii. 4.

[2] "Hæc verba Apostoli quid aliud sibi volunt, quam non satis esse quod dicimus, ut animas moveant hominum, nisi doctori divinitus adsit cœlestis gratiæ energia, juxta illud (*Ps.* lxvii, 13): Dominus dabit verbum evangelizantibus virtute multa?"

[3] *Rev. l.* 6, *c.* 35.

near him, in a voice which was also heard by all present: "I give you that compunction which you excited in the hearts of others when you preached." But more terrible is the incident related by Father Cajetan Mary de Bergamo, a Capuchin, in his book entitled *The Apostolic Man in the Pulpit.* This author relates that a preacher, then a Capuchin, related to him the following occurrence, which happened to himself a few years before. He being a young man and accomplished in polite literature, had already begun to preach in the cathedral at Brescia; but when preaching there a second time, after an interval of some years, he was observed to preach in quite an apostolic manner. Being afterward asked why he had thus changed his style of preaching, he replied: "I knew a celebrated preacher, a religious, a friend of mine, and who, like me, preached in a spirit of vanity; when he was at the point of death it was found impossible to induce him to make his confession. I went to see him, and spoke to him strongly; but he looked at me steadfastly without making a reply. In the meantime the Superior conceived the idea of bringing to him in his cell the Blessed Eucharist, in order to move him by this means to receive the sacraments. The most Holy Eucharist was brought, and those who were present said to him: 'Behold, Jesus Christ is come to grant you pardon.' But the sick man began to exclaim in a voice of despair: 'This is the God whose holy word I have betrayed.' We all then commenced to pray to the Lord that he would have compassion on him, or to exhort him to confide in the divine mercy; but he in a louder voice exclaimed: 'This is the God whose holy word I have betrayed;' and then added: 'There is no more mercy for me.' We continued to suggest to him sentiments of confidence, when a third time he cried out: 'This is the God whose holy word I have betrayed;' and then he said, 'By the just judgment of God I am condemned,' and suddenly expired. And this is the reason,

observed the Father, why I have so much reformed my manner of preaching."

Who knows but some one will smile at these facts, and the whole of my letter; but such a one I shall expect to meet before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Besides, I do not intend that at all times and before all sorts of persons the same style of expression should be used. When the audience is composed entirely of priests or educated persons, the preacher should make use of more select language; but his discourse should be always simple and familiar, as if he were discoursing in familiar conversation with the learned, and not decorated with lofty ideas and elaborate expressions; otherwise as, says St. Ambrose,[1] "the more florid the discourse, the less will be the fruit derived from it." The pomp and luxury which appear in the flowers of eloquence make it useless for the production of fruit. St. Augustine said that the preacher who seeks to please his auditors by an ornamental style is not an apostle that converts, but an orator that deludes; whence it may be said of his hearers what is said of the Jews, who, hearing Jesus Christ, admired his doctrine, but were not converted.[2] They will exclaim. "He spoke extremely well;" but they will have derived no profit whatever from the discourse. St. Jerome wrote to his friend Nepotianus that in preaching he should endeavor to elicit tears rather than applause from his auditory.[3] St. Francis de Sales expresses the same idea in a more emphatic manner in a letter to an ecclesiastic: "In leaving the church I would not wish it should be said, O how great an orator! he has a prodigious memory; he is very learned; he spoke admirably: but I would wish to hear

[1] "Quod luxuriat in flore sermonis, habetatur in fructu."—*In Ps.* 118, s. 12.

[2] "Mirabantur sed non convertebantur."—*In Joan.* tr. 29, n. 2.

[3] "Docente te in ecclesia, non clamor populi, sed gemitus suscitetur. Auditorum lacrimæ laudes tuæ sint."—*Ep. ad Nepotian.*

the people say, How beautiful, how necessary is penance! My God, how good, how just Thou art! and the like: or that the words of the preacher having made a breach in the hearts of the hearers, they were unable to render any testimony in favor of their merit but the amendment of their lives."[1]

Perhaps the preacher who studies to speak elegantly may entertain a hope that he will obtain universal applause: let him divest himself of this persuasion. Many will praise, many will criticise him; some will offer one opinion, some another. And such is the folly of those orators who preach themselves and not Jesus Christ that, with all their efforts to obtain vain applause, they do not, notwithstanding, obtain it from all; whilst, on the other hand, he who preaches Christ crucified always secures the fruit of his discourse, as by it he pleases God, which should be the only end of all our actions. Hence generally a simple and familiar style of preaching, as Muratori remarks, "will please and delight even persons of cultivated understanding; for, when the preacher speaks in a lofty and florid style, the hearer is satisfied with relishing and admiring his genius, and pays little or no attention to his own spiritual profit; on the other hand, even the learned commend a preacher who, with a view to benefit all, breaks for them that spiritual bread—the word of God. They will not praise his genius, but his fervor; by which, without making a display of talent, he proposes solely to serve the souls of his hearers—this is the true glory to which the sacred orator ought to aspire. Moreover, the learned who desire to derive fruit from the sermon seek not him who enlightens their minds, but him who heals their souls; and on this account both learned and unlearned crowd to hear him who preaches in a popular manner, because every one

[1] *Lettre* 218, *man. de prêcher*, ch. 2, a. 3.

finds there the spiritual nourishment that is necessary for him."

Seneca says that the sick man does not seek for the physician who speaks well, but who will cure him. To what purpose does it serve, he says, for you to entertain me with fine words when I stand in need of the cautery and the knife to cure me.[1] Wherefore St. Bernard says: "I like to hear the voice of that teacher who seeks to gain of me, not applause, but tears."[2] I recollect that the renowned D. Nicholas Capasso, a man so distinguished for learning, went every day to hear the Canon Gizzio whilst he was giving the spiritual exercises to the members of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost; he said that he went to hear that servant of God because he preached the word of God in an apostolic manner, and without studied elegance. Oh how does the pure and simple word of God please even the learned! Muratori relates in the Life of Paul Segneri the Younger, which he wrote, that, although he preached in a familiar and popular style, he delighted all so much that he touched the hearts even of the most enlightened among his audience.

In like manner, in the Life[3] of St. John Francis Regis I find the following passage: "His discourses were simple: he preached only to instruct the people; and, notwithstanding, the gentry as well as seculars and clergy of the town of Puy crowded to his catechetical discourses so eagerly that for two or three hours before he began every place was occupied; and it was the common saying of the inhabitants of Puy that they admired his holy simplicity more than the studied elegance of the most distinguished preachers. He,

[1] "Non quærit æger medicum eloquentem sed sanantem. Quid oblectas? aliud agitur; urendus, secandus sum: ad hæc adhibitus es."

[2] "Illius doctoris libenter vocem audio, qui non sibi plausum, sed mihi planctum moveat."—*In Cant.* s. 59, n. 3.

[3] *By Father Daubenton*, l. 3.

they observed, preaches Jesus Christ and the divine word as it really is; while the others come here to preach themselves, and, instead of the divine word, display their own eloquence, which is altogether human." And the following fact, which is afterward mentioned, is remarkable:—There was a certain preacher who gave a series of instructions in the cathedral during the same Lent in which the saint was giving a mission. Being astonished how it was that the people left him to go to hear an ignorant priest, as he considered St. Francis compared with himself, he went to find the Provincial, who at that time was making his visitation, and said to him that Father Regis was indeed a saint, but that his manner of preaching was not suitable to the dignity of the pulpit, and that the meanness of his style and the trivial things he said dishonored his ministry. The Provincial replied: "Let us both, before we condemn him, go and hear him." The Provincial was so much affected with the force and unction with which he explained the evangelical truths, that during the entire discourse he was shedding copious tears; then, on leaving the church, turning to his companion, he said, "Ah, my Father, would to God that all sacred orators preached in that manner! Let us allow him to preach with his own apostolic simplicity—The finger of God is there." The same preacher, says the writer of his Life, was touched with such compunction in hearing the discourse, that instead of censuring him, as he had proposed, he even praised him as he deserved.

V.—Let us now say something of panegyrics, as we promised. Why, I ask, do panegyrics, as they are composed nowadays, produce no fruit? How fruitful would they be were they delivered with simplicity, detailing with devout reflections the virtues of the saints; thus would the people be moved to imitate their example. This undoubtedly is the object of panegyrics, and hence the masters of the spiritual life recommend strongly the reading of the lives of

the saints. Therefore St. Philip Neri, as the writer of his Life relates, recommended the members of his Congregation to adduce, in preaching, some example from the life of a saint, in order that the doctrine might be more firmly impressed on the minds of the hearers; but he wished that such facts should be mentioned as would move the auditors to compunction rather than excite their wonder. Father John Dielegis, who wrote on the manner of composing panegyrics, says that panegyrics do not produce fruit through the fault of the auditors who come to hear the discourse, not to derive any benefit from it, but to listen to exquisite thoughts and an elegant discourse; but he would have said with more truth, that the fault is generally imputable to orators who fill their discourses with conceits and affected language, for the purpose of obtaining empty praise, when their only object should be, as the same author observes, to move their hearers to the imitation of the virtues of the saints of whom they speak. But let us hear what Muratori says on modern panegyrics. In his work already cited, *Popular Eloquence*, in the 13th chapter, he writes thus: "Why do sacred orators for the most part heap together gems and flowers, and make a parade of their eloquence? The end of panegyrics is to lead the auditory, by such examples, to the practice of virtue; but few indeed think of this. Good God! how many extravagant hyperboles! how many fantastic ideas! in a word, how many silly conceits!"

And in truth, what fruit can be derived from the panegyrics of certain learned preachers, who fill them with flowers, subtleties, ingenious thoughts, curious descriptions, high-sounding words unintelligible to persons of ordinary capacity, rounded periods, so long that, to comprehend their meaning, even the learned require to exert all the powers of their minds, so that they nearly resemble academical discourses, in which his own glory is the only object of the

speaker. O God! what a disorder to see a minister of Jesus Christ expend uselessly many months and much labor (one of this class of preachers, who is now in eternity, said, that to compose a panegyric he required at least six months), and for what purpose?—to round periods, and heap together figures and flowers. And what profit does the orator derive from this either for himself or for others? For himself, nothing but a little smoke; and as for the hearers, they derive from it nothing, or almost nothing, because either they do not understand it, or, if they do, their attention is distracted by those sounding words and ingenious thoughts; and thus they lose their time. It has been related to me by several persons deserving of credit, that the preacher mentioned above, who said that to compose one panegyric he required six months, being at the point of death, gave directions that all his manuscripts should be burned. I was moreover assured that this same person, being once complimented by others for his panegyrics, was much troubled, and replied: "Alas! these discourses will one day be my condemnation.

Muratori, in a work entitled *Christian Charity*, writes as follows: "Oh, why have we so many panegyrics, which invariably terminate in a vain display of talent and ingenious subtleties, devised by volatile imaginations, unintelligible to the people?" And then he adds: "Let a panegyric, if intended to be useful, be composed in that popular and intelligible style of eloquence which instructs and moves the ignorant no less than the learned; but this is oftentimes not understood by him who fancies himself more learned than others." Oh! that these frothy panegyrics were abolished in the Church, and that these discourses were composed in a simple and familiar manner, as this writer says, who was eminent at once for piety and learning.

But, before I conclude, it is necessary that I should reply to the observation which your letter contains—that to enter-

tain is one of the principal objects of the orator, and therefore when persons of education assist at a sermon, the preacher should speak in a polished and ornamental style in order to please them.

Reverend Father, I will not reply to you: St. Francis de Sales answers for me, who, in the letter already cited, which he addresses to an ecclesiastic on the manner of preaching, in confirmation of all we have advanced above in the fifth chapter, writes as follows: "Lengthened periods, polished language, studied gesture, and the like, are the bane of preaching. The most useful and elegant artifice is, to employ none. Our words should be inflamed by an interior charity, and should come from the heart rather than the mouth: the heart speaks to the heart; the tongue speaks but to the ear. The texture of the discourse should be natural, without vain ornament, without affected expression. Our forefathers, and all those whose preaching has brought forth fruit, abstained from speaking with too much elegance, and from using the ornaments of worldly eloquence, because they spoke from the heart, as good parents do to their children. The object of the preacher is to convert sinners and to make the just perfect; whence, ascending the pulpit, he should say in his heart: *Ego veni ut isti vitam habeant et abundantius habeant.*"[1] Then the saint, speaking of the pleasure the preacher should afford, uses the following words: "I know that many say the preacher should delight; but as for me, I distinguish, and say, that there is a pleasure consequent on the doctrine which is preached and the impression made upon the hearers; for what soul is so insensible as not to feel extreme pleasure in learning the way to heaven; how to gain paradise; in comprehending the love which God bears us? And, in order to impart this pleasure, all diligence should be used to in-

[1] *Lettre* 218, *man. de prêcher*, ch. 5, a. 1, 3, 4; ch. 2, a. 2.

struct and to move. But there is another sort of pleasure which oftentimes is an obstacle to instruction and to persuasion—a tickling of the ear by a profane elegance of language, and a certain balancing of words, which is altogether artificial. And as to this, I say without hesitation, that a preacher should not make use of it, because it belongs to profane orators; and whosoever preaches in this manner preaches not Christ crucified, but himself. St. Paul detests preachers who are *prurientes auribus*, and consequently such as are solicitous to please their hearers." [1] So far the saint: and let it be observed, that the writings of this saint are, in a special manner, approved and adopted by the Church, which prays that by their guidance we may arrive at eternal happiness.[2] Such is the prayer we recite in the Office of the saint.

In conformity with this, the learned theologian Habert, speaking of the style which the ministers of the Gospel should adopt in preaching, says that the preacher should endeavor to please, by a style clear, easy, and accommodated to the capacity of each of his auditors.[3] Then the audience will be gratified, as St. Francis de Sales observes, by understanding the eternal truths, the maxims of the Gospel, and by knowing what they have to do, or to avoid, in order to be saved; they will be pleased whilst they feel themselves touched with compunction, animated with confidence, and inflamed with the love of God.

St. Augustine says that if the pleasures of sense delight,

[1] *Ib.* ch, 2, a. 3.

[2] "Concede propitius ut ejus *dirigentibus monitis*, æterna gaudia consequamur."—We may also apply this remark to the teachings of our saint; for we also read in the prayer of his Office: *Ut ejus salutaribus monitis edocti . . . ad te pervenire feliciter valeamus.* He was moreover, raised to the dignity of Doctor of the Church.—Ed.

[3] "Evangelii minister delectabit, si sit sermonis apti, facilis, ac perspicui."

much more delightful is the knowledge of the truth; and hence, he adds, there is nothing which the soul so ardently desires as to know the truth.[1] Agreeably to this, St. Francis observes, in his treatise on the love of God: "Truth is the object of the understanding, and hence it finds all its pleasure in knowing the truth; and the more sublime it is, the greater its gratification: whence the ancient philosophers abandoned riches, honors, and pleasures, that they might understand the truths of nature. And Aristotle said that human felicity consists in wisdom; that is, in knowing the truth of the most excellent things."[2] Hence the saint concludes, that a soul cannot enjoy greater delight than in acquiring a knowledge of the truths of faith; the more as the knowledge of them is not only a source of pleasure to us, but also eminently useful, as upon them depends all our happiness for time and eternity.

Wherefore St. Antonius says that the preacher ought indeed to delight his audience; but for what end? In order that, being moved by the discourse, they may be induced to practise what they have learned.[3] On the other hand, St. John Chrysostom affirms that the ruin of the Church is the great eagerness of sacred orators, not to move their hearers to compunction, but to please them with fine words, as if they came to hear a singer chant a piece of sacred music in the pulpit. "Such preachers," continues the saint, "act like a father who gives to his sick child what it wants. Such a one, however, does not deserve the name of father. This happens every time that one seeks flowery language, not to

[1] "Quid enim fortius desiderat anima quam veritatem?"—*In Jo.* tr. 26, n. 5.

[2] *Love of God*, B. 3, ch. 9.

[3] "Ut sic moveat affectum ut flectat scilicet curando, ut quæ dicta sunt, velit implere."—P. 3, tit. 18, ch. 3, § 4.

inspire compunction, but to win vain praise."[1] Yes, Reverend Sir, there are many sacred orators who delight their auditory by their elegant and pompous diction, and attract crowds to their sermons. But I would wish to know how many of those who are so highly pleased with their discourses, full of elegance and ornament, leave the church with a contrite heart, and afterward amend their lives. Such precisely was the language of St. Francis when mention was made before him of preachers who had obtained great applause. "Be so good as to tell me," he would say, "how many were converted by their preaching." The accursed passion for display spoils the sermons of many preachers, and destroys the fruit of them for those who hear him. This made St. Vincent de Paul exclaim, as we read in his Life: "O cursed ambition of display! how many virtues do you infect! of how many evils are you the cause! You make him who should preach Jesus Christ, preach himself, and destroy when he should save."[2]

Some, in order to entertain the audience, ornament, or rather disfigure, their sermons with witticisms and ridiculous anecdotes, and even go so far as to say that this is necessary in instructions or catechetical discourses addressed to the people, in order to excite and keep alive their attention and interest. But I know that the saints in their sermons did not make the people laugh, but weep. When St. John Francis Regis preached (and his sermons were always familiar) the audience wept from the beginning to the end of the

[1] "Subvertit ecclesiam, quod et vos non quæritis sermonen qui pungere possit, sed qui oblectet, quasi cantores audientes. Et idem sit ac si Pater videns puerum ægrotum illi, quæcumque oblectent, porrigat, talem non dixerim Patrem. Hoc etiam nobis accidit, flosculos verborum sectamur, ut oblectemus, non ut compugamus, et laudibus obtentis, abeamus."—*In Act. hom.* 30.

[2] *Abelly*, l. 3. ch. 34.

discourse. A facetious remark, naturally suggested by the occasion, may perhaps be allowed; but to reduce the exhortation to a comic scene, as some do, by introducing ridiculous trifles or curious stories, with attitudes and gestures designed to make the audience laugh—I do not know how they can reconcile such an exhibition with the respect due to the temple of God, and to the pulpit from which is announced the word of God, and in which the preacher fulfils the office of ambassador of Jesus Christ. The auditors indeed will laugh and be merry, but afterward they will be distracted and indevout, and instead of attending to the moral instruction, will continue to reflect upon the witticism or ridiculous story which they have heard.

From all I have written, your Reverence will be able to infer what surprise the assertion contained in your letter caused me, that the preacher should delight his auditory by a polished and ornamented style. I hope in the Lord that you will remove from your mind this prejudice, this grievous error, hurtful to your own soul, and to all those who will assist at your instructions.

And as your Reverence is so very humble as to condescend, toward the close of your letter, to ask of an unworthy sinner some instructions for preaching with advantage to the people, I recommened you for the most part, in your sermons to speak of the last things—death, judgment, hell, eternity, and the like; because the eternal truths make the deepest impression, and incline the heart to the love of virtue. I beg of you, repeatedly in your discourses to explain to the people the peace enjoyed by the soul that is in favor with God. St. Francis de Sales by this means drew away many souls from a vicious life, and on that account Henry IV., King of France, commended him much, blaming other preachers who make the way of virtue appear so difficult that they deter souls from entering upon it. I entreat you also to speak often of the love that Jesus Christ

has shown us in his Passion, in the institution of the most Holy Sacrament, and of the love we should bear in turn toward our most Blessed Redeemer, by often calling to mind these two great mysteries of love. I say this because few preachers, or at least too few, speak of the love of Jesus Christ; and it is certain that what is done solely through fear of punishment and not through love will be of short duration. A great servant of God, and a great laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, Father Gennaro Sarnelli, used to say: "I would wish to do nothing else but proclaim without ceasing: love Jesus Christ, love Jesus Christ, because he is deserving of your love." In like manner often recommend, in preaching, devotion to the most Holy Virgin, through whose intercession all graces come to us, by making the people have recourse to her at the end of the sermon to obtain some special grace, as the forgiveness of their sins, holy perseverance, and the love of Jesus Christ. Above all, I beg of you to give practical advice to your audience, by suggesting the means of persevering in the grace of God, such as to guard the eyes from looking at dangerous objects, to fly evil occasions—from conversing with persons of a different sex or vicious companions; to frequent the sacraments; to hear Mass every day; to enter into some pious sodality; to practise mental prayer, instructing them at the same time practically in the manner of making it; to read spiritual books; to visit the most Holy Sacrament; to make the examination of conscience; to recite the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You should often inculcate conformity to the divine will amidst contradictions, as upon this conformity our perfection and salvation depend. Exhort them particularly to have recourse each day to Jesus and Mary, to obtain holy perseverance, and especially in the time of temptation; and I strenuously recommend you constantly to suggest to the people that great means of salvation, prayer—a subject which I remark preachers treat

very seldom, and very slightly, although upon prayer depend our eternal salvation and all our good.

I am aware that speaking upon such practical subjects has little attraction for those preachers who aim at loftiness of speech, because they appear to them to be trivial matters, and they do not admit of ingenious thoughts and sounding periods. But it was thus that St. Francis de Sales preached, who converted by his sermons innumerable souls: he always enforced the practices of a Christian life, so that in one country district the people desired to have in writing the practical rules which he recommended from the pulpit, that they might be the better able to put them in practice.

Oh, if all sacred orators preached solely with the view of pleasing God, in an easy and popular style, and discoursed on the truths and the maxims of the Gospel, in a manner plain, simple, and unadorned, and enforced practically the the remedies against sins, and the means of persevering and of advancing in the divine love, the world would change its face, and God would not be offended as we now see him. We may remark, that the country parish in which there is a fervent priest, who truly preaches Christ crucified, is soon reclaimed and sanctified. I say, moreover, if a pious and simple discourse is delivered in a church the whole auditory is touched with compunction, and if they are not all converted, they are at least moved and affected; if such a style of preaching, then, were universal, what advantage would we see universally accrue to souls!

I will trespass on you no longer; but as you had the patience to read this long letter, I beg of you to join me in the following prayer to Jesus Christ:

O Saviour of the world, who art little known and loved less by the world, especially through the fault of Thy ministers; Thou who didst give up Thy life for the salvation of souls,—I beseech Thee through the merits of Thy Passion to enlighten and inflame so many priests who might con-

vert sinners, and sanctify the entire earth if they preached Thy word with humility and simplicity, as Thou and Thy disciples preached it. But, alas! they do not do so; they preach themselves, and not Thee: and thus the world is full of preachers, and in the meantime hell is constantly crowded with souls. O Lord, repair this mighty ruin which preachers cause in Thy Church; and if it be necessary, humble, I pray Thee, as an example to others, by some visible sign, those priests who for their own glory adulterate Thy holy word, that they may amend, and that they may not thus obstruct the spiritual profit of the people. Thus I hope, thus I pray.

I recommend myself to your prayers, and remain your Reverence's most devoted and obedient servant,

ALPHONSUS M.,
Bishop of S. Agatha.

LETTER 9.

To a Bishop.

On the Utility of the Missions.

I have received your Lordship's most esteemed letter, in which I see your zeal for procuring missions for all the villages of your diocese, and in which your Lordship states several objections which have been made against the advantages of the missions. In obedience to your Lordship's commands I shall detail at full length my views on the matter, and shall answer all the groundless objections which have been put forward against the holy missions.

It is certain, that the conversion of sinners is the greatest benefit that God can bestow upon man. St. Thomas[1] says that the gift of grace by which God justifies the sinner is a greater favor than the beatitude of glory. But the conversion of sinners is precisely the end of the missions; for, by the instructions and sermons of the missions, they are convinced of the malice of sin, of the importance of salvation, and of the goodness of God, and thus their hearts are changed, the bonds of vicious habits are broken, and they begin to live like Christians.

In the Old as well as in the New Law the Lord ordained that the world should be saved by means of the missions. The faith, according to St. Paul, has been propagated by preaching; but preaching would have been ineffectual if God had not sent the preachers. *How*, says the Apostle, *shall they believe him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they*

[1] 1. 2, q. 113. a. 9.

preach unless they be sent.[1] Hence, according to St. Gregory, the missions began at the commencement of the world: for God has never at any time neglected to send workmen to cultivate his vineyard.[2] In the Old Testament he sent the prophets to preach the law, and in the New he has sent his own Son to teach us the new law of grace, which is the perfection and accomplishment of the old law. *God who in times past spoke to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by his Son.*[3]

But because Jesus Christ was sent to preach only in Judea, he appointed the apostles that, after his death, they might preach the Gospel to all nations.[4] By the preaching of the apostles, as we learn from St. Paul, the Gospel began to fructify throughout the world.[5] The apostles sent their disciples to propagate the faith in the other nations, which they themselves had not been able to reach. And in after years, as we know from ecclesiastical history, holy workmen were sent by the Sovereign Pontiff and by other bishops to preach the Gospel in other kingdoms. In the fourth century St. Ireneus was sent to France. In the fifth, St. Palladius was sent to Scotland, and St. Patrick to Ireland. In the sixth, St. Gregory sent St. Augustine to England. In the seventh, St. Eligius was sent to Flanders, St. Kilian to Franconia, Sts. Swidbert and Willibrord to Holland. In the eighth century Gregory the Second sent St. Boniface to Germany, St. Wulfran to Friesland, and St. Hubert to Brabant. In the

1 "Quomodo credent ei quem non audierunt? Quomodo autem audient, sine prædicante? Quomodo vero prædicabunt, nisi mittantur?"—*Rom.* x. 14.

2 "Ad erudiendam ergo Dominus plebem suam, quasi ad excolendam vineam, nullo tempore destitit operarios mittere."—*In Evang.* hom. 19.

3 "Novissime, diebus istis, locutus est nobis in Filio."—*Heb.* i. 2.

4 "Euntes in mundum universum prædicate evangelium omni creaturæ."—*Mark*, xvi. 15.

5 "In universo mundo est, et fructificat, et crescit."—*Col.* i. 6.

ninth, St. Ascanius was sent to Denmark and Sweden, and St. Methodius to Bohemia, Moravia, and Bulgaria. In the tenth, St. Maynard was sent to Livonia, and St. Ottone to Pomerania. In the thirteenth century, the Pope sent Dominicans and Franciscans to Greece, Armenia, Ethiopia, Tartary, and Norway. These facts have been taken from a work entitled *Historical Notices of the Church.*

Finally, we know that in later times immense numbers have been converted from paganism in the East Indies and Japan by St. Francis Xavier, and in the West Indies by St. Louis Bertrand. I abstain from mentioning the many provinces of infidels and heretics which were converted by missionaries. St. Francis de Sales was sent to the province of Chablais, and converted seventy-two thousand heretics. We also know that St. Vincent de Paul instituted a Congregation of priests, which was approved by the Holy See. The priests of this Congregation are called "The Fathers of the Mission," because their lives are spent in giving missions in all places to which they are invited.

In a word, wherever the faith has been planted or a reformation of morals introduced, all has been effected by means of the missions; and when the scourges of heaven—earthquakes, wars, famine, and pestilence—have failed to convert the people, when the civil laws with all their penalties have not succeeded in preventing murders, thefts, adulteries, and blasphemies, the missions have been found effectual; hence, the learned Contenson of the Order of St. Dominic says that by the missions alone souls obtain eternal life.[1] Hence, when a mission is to be given in any place, we can clearly perceive the efforts of hell to prevent it. For there is always some dissolute person who does all in his power to prevent the mission, because he knows that

[1] "Per solas missiones impletur prædestinatio, quæ est transmissio creaturæ rationalis in vitam æternam."—*Theol.* l. 3, d. 6, c. 2, sp. 2.

it will be an effectual obstacle to the execution of his wicked designs. But if in cities the missions are most useful, they are necessary in the villages and small towns as well for the instruction of the people as to give them an opportunity of making a good confession. First, in the small towns the missions are necessary for the instruction of the people. It is true, in all or in almost all Catholic countries, sermons are preached to the people during Lent. But the people derive far greater fruit from the sermons of the missionaries than from the Lenten discourses. For the preachers for Lent ordinarily preach in a high and flowery style, or at least in a manner not adapted to the capacity of the poor. They have their sermons committed to memory, and cannot change them, whether their audience consists of the learned or ignorant. When the preachers of the villages came to ask the blessing of Cardinal Pignatelli, Archbishop of Naples, his Eminence recommended them to address the people in a simple and popular style. For, said his Eminence, the greater part of the people being illiterate, derive no fruit from the sermons unless the language be accommodated to their capacity. He then added: Perhaps you will tell me that the prescription is already written. I then answer, Oh, what a pity for the patients!

The remarks of this holy prelate were most just; for, what benefit can a sick man derive from remedies which have been prescribed without a knowledge of his disease?

Hence, when the poor people of the country places are asked what fruit they have received from the sermon, they answer that they could not understand it because the preacher spoke Latin. It is not true that these preachers always speak Latin, but their language is so little adapted to the weak understanding of the ignorant that to them it is as unintelligible as if it were Latin. I assert, and in this assertion I believe I am not rash, that it would be sometimes better for the ignorant to be absent from these sermons.

For after listening for an hour to a sermon, in the hope of deriving from it spiritual profit, they find that their time has been lost, and thus they conceive a dislike for the word of God, and become worse than they were before. Hence it is that after the sermons of Lent we see the same bad practices, the same animosities, and hear the same blasphemies and the same obscenities. The greatest misery of the poor in the country is, as Contenson says, that there is no one to break to them the word of God; and therefore, he says, woe to the bishops, woe to the negligent priests![1]

But, it will be asked, are there not over the poor in the villages pastors who preach every Sunday? Yes, there are pastors who preach; but we must consider that all pastors do not, or cannot break the bread of the divine word to the illiterate in the manner prescribed by the Council of Trent. "They shall feed the people committed to them with wholesome words, according to their own capacity, and that of their people, by teaching them the things which it is necessary for all to know unto salvation, and by announcing to them, with briefness and plainness of discourse, the vices which they must avoid, and the virtues which they must practise."[2] Hence it often happens that the people draw but little fruit from the sermon of the pastor, either because he has but little talent for preaching, or because his style is too high or his discourse too long. Besides, many of those who stand in the greatest need of instruction do not go to the sermon of the parish priest. Moreover, Jesus Christ tells us that *No prophet is accepted in his own*

[1] "Tot parvuli in oppidulis petunt panem et non est qui frangat eis. Væ, væ prælatis dormientibus, væ presbyteris otiosis!"—*Loco cit.*

[2] "Plebes sibi commissas, pro earum capacitate, pascant salutaribus verbis, docendo necessaria ad salutem annunciandoque cum brevitate et facilitate sermonis vitia quæ eas declinare, et virtutes, quas sectari oporteat."—*Sess.* 5, c. 2, *de Ref.*

conntry.[1] And when the people always hear the same voice, the sermon makes but little impression upon them.

But the sermons of the missionaries who devote their lives to the missions are well arranged, and are all adapted to the capacity of the ignorant as well as of the learned. In their sermons, as well as in their instructions, the word of God is broken. Hence, in the mission, the poor are made to understand the mysteries of faith and the precepts of the Decalogue, the manner of receiving the sacraments with fruit, and the means of persevering in the grace of God: they are inflamed with fervor, and are excited to correspond with the divine love, and to attend to the affair of salvation. Hence we see such a concourse of the people at the missions, where they hear strange voices and simple and popular discourses. Besides, in the missions, the eternal truths which are best calculated to move the heart, such as the importance of salvation, the malice of sin, death, judgment, hell, eternity, etc., are proposed in a connected manner, so that it would be a greater wonder that a dissolute sinner should persevere in his wickedness, than that he should be converted. Hence, in the missions, many sinners give up their evil habits, remove proximate occasions of sin, restore ill-gotten goods, and repair injuries. Many radically extirpate all sentiments of hatred, and forgive their enemies from their hearts; and many who had not approached the sacraments for years, or who received them unworthily, make good confessions during the missions.

It has been said that, in the ten or fifteen days during which the mission lasts, the missionaries have given absolution to many relapsing sinners, who would require a trial of several months before they could be safely absolved. Would to God that all confessions were made with the same dispositions with which they are made in the missions. Oh, how

1 "Nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua."—*Luke*, iv. 24.

small should be the number of damned souls! Surely length of time is not the only means of ascertaining the dispositions of a penitent; it may be a very fallacious means. How many are there who, in order to receive absolution during the time of the paschal precept, abstain for a month and more from the habits of sin, who interrupt their evil practices, and relapse immediately after? I therefore am of opinion that the disposition of a penitent may be better known from the deep impression made by the sermons, from the compunction of heart which he manifests, from the resolution which he makes, and from the means which he adopts in order to avoid sin, than from length of time. St. Cyprian says that charity is perfected, not so much by length of time, as by the efficacy of grace. And St. Thomas says that God sometimes infuses so much compunction into the hearts of sinners that they instantly acquire perfect sanctity.[1] At a synod of the Bishops of Flanders, held at Brussels, the following decree was made: "The confessor, in the case of greater sinners, even when they are backsliders, should not ask that they perform works of penance for a notable time, but he should with the holy Fathers be mindful that God in the conversion of the sinner considers not the measure of time but of sorrow."[2] Moreover, since the matter of the sacrament of penance is moral and not physical, it is sufficient for the confessor to have a moral certainty which (as the author of the instructor of Young Confessors says) is nothing else than a prudent probable judgment, not opposed by a prudent doubt of the dispositions of the penitent. Those

[1] "Quandoque tanta commotione convertit (Deus) cor hominis, ut subito perfecte consequatur sanitatem spiritualem."—P. 3, q. 86, c. 5.

[2] "Confessarius a quibusvis peccatoribus gravioribus etiam recidivis, stata lege, non exigat ut per notabile tempus præviæ exercuerint opera pœnitentiæ; sed cum sanctis Patribus expendat Deum, in conversione peccatoris, non tam considerare mensuram temporis quam doloris."

who have assisted in giving missions, and who are accustomed to hear confessions, know well the difference between the confessions made on other occasions and the confessions made during the missions. They are fully convinced that in the missions penitents confess their sins with true sorrow, and with a firm purpose of amendment.

The reparation of so many sacrilegious confessions in which sins are concealed through shame, particularly by women, should of itself be sufficient to render the missions very desirable. This great evil of bad confessions is more common in small villages in which there are but few confessors, who are acquainted with all the inhabitants. Penitents are ashamed to confess their sins to confessors whom they meet every day, and thus through shame they continue to make sacrilegious confessions during their whole lives. Many, through this accursed shame, conceal their sins even at the hour of death, and thus sacrilegiously receive the last sacraments. Hence, the reparation of so many bad confessions is one of the greatest advantages of the missions. The people, knowing that the missionaries are strangers who will remain only for a few days, and whom they will never see again, are easily induced, by the terrors of the divine judgments proposed in the sermons of the mission, to confess the sins which they had before concealed.

Hence I say that in every village the mission should continue as long as will be necessary for the missionaries to hear the confessions of all the inhabitants; otherwise, many persons will not be able to make their confession to the Fathers, and thus their consciences will be perplexed and troubled.

For, by the sermons, scruples are excited; but by the sermons alone, a person addicted to bad habits, to unjust contracts, or inveterate hatred is not sufficiently taught what he must do in order to tranquillize his conscience. But in confession everything is adjusted, and the penitent is instructed how to make restitution for injuries done to others

in their property or character, how to remove the occasions of his sins, and how to pardon injuries. But if the doubts and scruples excited by the sermons be not removed in the confessional, many persons will be more perplexed and troubled in mind than they were before the mission began. And if a person whose past confessions were sacrilegious cannot confess to the missionaries, he will, being obliged to make his confession to the priest of the village, continue, as before, to conceal his sins. Where the mission is so short that all the inhabitants of the place have not time to make their confession to the missionaries, it will do more injury than service to many souls. For, some persons whose ignorance rendered the omission of certain sins in confession excusable, being instructed in their obligation, will be found to confess these sins, but will not have courage to disclose these to the confessor of the place: thus, they will commit sacrileges and be lost.

Finally, all the world knows the immense good which has been and is daily done by the missions. A description of the innumerable conversions of sinners, produced by means of the missions, would be too long for this letter; but I shall mention a few.

Speaking of the missions of Father Segneri the Younger, the celebrated Muratori says that the entire people gave up their employments to attend his sermons. He says that hatred for their sins and compunction of heart were plainly depicted in the countenances of all. Human respect and human feelings were trodden under foot, the most obdurate sinners were converted, and the confessors were obliged to hear the confessions not only by day but by night. He adds that after the mission the whole town appeared to be changed: scandals were removed, abuses corrected, inveterate and obstinate animosities ceased, and blasphemies, imprecations, and obscenities were no longer heard. A similar description has been published of the fruits of the

missions of Father Joseph Carabantes, a Capuchin; but in one city the people were so deeply penetrated with compunction that almost all of them went through the streets in the garments of penance, scourging themselves, and with tears asking of God the pardon of their sins.

Speaking of the missions given by the venerable priests of the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul, the author of his Life says that, during a mission in the diocese of Palestrina in 1657, a young man whose arm had been cut off by an enemy, having met his enemy in a public street after a sermon, cast himself at his feet, asked pardon for the hatred he had borne him, and, rising up, embraced him with so much affection that all who were present wept through joy, and many, moved by his example, pardoned all the injuries that they had received from their enemies. In the same diocese there were two widows who had been earnestly entreated but constantly refused to pardon certain persons who had killed their husbands. During the mission they were perfectly reconciled with the murderers, in spite of the remonstrance of a certain person who endeavored to persuade them to the contrary, saying that the murders were but recent, and that the blood of their husbands was still warm. The following fact is still more wonderful:—In a certain town, which I shall not mention,* vindictiveness prevailed to such an extent that parents taught their children how to take revenge for every offence, however small: this vice was so deeply rooted that it appeared impossible to persuade the people to pardon injuries. The people came to the exercises of the mission with sword and musket, and many with other weapons. For some time the sermons did not pro-

* In the Life of the saint by Abelly, b. 4, ch. 5, this place is called Niolo, situated in the island of Corsica, where a mission was given in 1652. This Life presents many other very interesting details about the good done in the missions given by the children of St. Vincent de Paul.—Ed.

duce a single reconciliation; but on a certain day, the preacher, through a divine inspiration, presented the crucifix to the audience, saying: "Now let every one who bears malice to his enemies come and show that for the love of his Saviour he wishes to pardon them: let him embrace them in Jesus Christ." After these words a parish priest whose nephew had been lately killed came up to the preacher and kissed the crucifix, and calling the murderer, who was present, embraced him cordially. By this example and by the words of the preacher the people were so much moved that for an hour and a half they were employed in the church in making peace with their enemies and embracing those whom they had before hated. The hour being late, they continued to do the same on the following day, so that parents pardoned the murder of their children, wives of their husbands, and children of their fathers and brothers. These reconciliations were made with so many tears and so much consolation that the inhabitants long continued to bless God for the signal favor bestowed on the town. It is also related that many notorious robbers and assassins, being moved by the sermon, or by what they heard from others of it, gave up their arms and began to lead a Christian life. Nearly forty of these public malefactors were converted in a single mission.

We read in his Life of the stupendous effects produced by the missions of Father Leonard of Port Maurice, of the reformed Franciscans. In a village of Corsica called Mariana, murders were so frequently committed through revenge that entire families were extinguished; such was the fruit of a mission given by Father Leonard that at the end of it there was not a single individual in the town who had not made peace with his enemies. In another place, called Casaccone, there was a family who obstinately refused to be reconciled with certain persons who had offended them. But when, at the close of the mission, the preacher declared that he did

not intend to bless those who retained sentiments of hatred in their hearts, all the members of that family came forward, and with many tears made peace with their opponents. During the mission in this place, a young man came from a distance, for the purpose of killing an enemy, whom he expected to find at the exercises of the mission; but by hearing the sermon he was converted, laid aside his hatred and made a general confession. In a town called Castel d'Acqua, there was a great number of opposite factions: during the mission they came one day, armed, to the church. Great slaughter was apprehended; but by the sermon their hearts were filled with compunction: they went of their own accord to the preacher, and a common peace was established. In another place there were two parties who had been at variance for twenty years; in these contentions many persons were killed. Through the obstinacy of their chief, whose name was Lupo, one of the parties at the beginning of the mission refused to make peace; but at the end of the mission, seeing that his opponents were reconciled with God, and that he was still the enemy of God, Lupo was struck with remorse, and offered to make peace: thus the two parties were reconciled. In Leghorn great preparations were made for the amusement of the carnival; but as soon as the mission began, the masks and dances and, because no person would go to the theatres, even the public comedies were given up. These are ordinary, not extraordinary, fruits of all missions: I therefore abstain from saying more on this subject.

Let us now come to the objections that are made against the utility of the missions. It is said in the first place that the fruit of the missions is only temporary, that, though it appears great, it lasts but a short time, and that the wicked become worse than they were before. I answer, would to God that all who are converted would persevere! It is one of the miseries of human nature that many who recover

the grace of God lose it again by sin. But though it should be admitted that the fruits of the missions are not permanent, it is at least certain that, during the mission, bad practices are given up, scandals are removed, blasphemies cease, a great deal of ill-gotten property is restored, and many bad confessions are repaired. But it is not true that, after the missions, all sinners become worse than they were before; many persevere in the grace of God, and others, if they relapse, abstain for many months from mortal sin. Moreover, by listening to the sermons of the missions, the people acquire a more perfect knowledge of God and of the importance of salvation, and a greater horror of sin; and if they relapse into sin, they endeavor to rise again at the time of the Paschal Communion. I hold for certain that, if among all those who have attended the sermons any one die within a year after the mission, he will scarcely be lost. The fruits of the mission are always visible at least for a year or two; and if they do not last longer, it is because the priests of the place do not labor to preserve and maintain them by assembling the people to meditation and to the visit of the Blessed Sacrament, and, above all, by attending to the confessional. "*Væ*," says the learned Contenson, "*prælatis dormientibus, væ presbyteris otiosis.*" But when, after three or four years, the land becomes dry, it is necessary to refresh it by another mission.

The second objection against the missions is that the consciences of many are disturbed by scruples excited by the sermons. Oh what an objection! Then, rather than disturb their conscience, it is better to allow sinners to slumber in the lethargy of sin, and in an accursed peace which is the seal of damnation! The devil wishes that the false peace of sinners, which keeps them in a state of perdition, should not be disturbed! But it is the duty of a pastor to awaken those who sleep in sin, and to warn them of the danger of

damnation to which they are exposed; and surely there is no better means of arousing sinners to a sense of the perils by which they are beset, than the missions.

Hence, bishops should take care that missions be given in every village, however. small. Where there are many villages near one another, some missionaries select for the mission a place in the midst of these villages. The greatest sinners, who are consequently the most blind and the most careless of their salvation, do not go to the exercises of the mission unless they are performed in their own church. They remain at home under the pretext that the church in which the mission is given is too distant, or that the weather is bad, and thus they continue in their miserable state of perdition. I speak from experience; for we found that many places derived little or no profit from the missions, either because these missions were given in the midst of several villages or because they were too short. Hence, when the missionaries of our little Congregation go into any diocese, it is usual to give the mission in every village, however small, at least for eight days, and in populous towns for fifteen, twenty, or thirty days, until the confessions of all are heard.

The third objection is that the exercises of the mission generally end at night, and are therefore a cause of much scandal. I answer that they who attend the exercises are struck with the terror of God's judgments; and should any one during that time be disposed to tempt others to sin, he could not expect to succeed: but even though some attempt should be made to draw others into sin, must the missions be given up? If, to avoid all danger of evil, it were necessary to abstain from what is good and profitable, we should prohibit festivals of the saints, processions, and pilgrimages to holy places, because in these things there is always some disorder; we should prohibit confession, Communion, and hearing

Mass, because even in these there are sometimes scandals and sacrileges. But we know that the Church not only permits but even approves and commands these things.

But it is said that from preaching at night many sins arise: and will there be no sins if the missions be given up? Ah, if the missions be given up, bad habits, quarrels, blasphemies, and all scandals will continue. But at least, during the mission, thousands of sins are avoided. But you will ask why are the sermons preached at night? I answer that, where the people attend by day, the sermons should be preached during the day and not at night; but, where they cannot attend by day, what can be done? It is certain that if, in the country places, the poor laboring classes, who form almost the entire audience, do not attend the sermons, the mission will be lost; but however strongly they may be exhorted to attend at an early hour, these poor people cannot come till after the work of the day. Masters and employers are recommended to allow their servants and workmen to give up their work at an early hour during the days of the mission; but these employers look to their own interest and pay but little attention to such recommendations. The workmen, unless they complete the day's work, are not paid. Without their wages they are not able to provide food for themselves or their families: hence in the villages the poor cannot attend till about sunset; and if they do not attend, I say the mission is lost.

The fourth objection is that some imprudent missionaries preach from the pulpit against the sins which they hear in the confessional, and excite in the people a hatred for confession. This objection has been made by some wicked persons who hate the missions, and is utterly destitute of foundation. The first thing the missionaries do after their arrival at the place of the mission, is to inform themselves of the prevailing sins and abuses of the place, and these they attack in their sermons. But they are careful never to mention in the

pulpit any circumstance which could in the most remote manner reveal any sin heard in confession. But of what are they to speak in the pulpit? Is it of ecstasies, raptures, visions, or of revelations? No, they must preach against the vices which are most common, and which are ordinarily committed in all places, such as impurity, blasphemies, hatred, theft, and the like.

Finally, it is said that the missions, being repeated every three years, are too frequent, and therefore produce little or no impression on the minds of the people. I admit that, between two successive missions in the same place, there should be a considerable interval of time; but an interval of three years is quite sufficient. For, ordinarily speaking, in that space of time many forget the sermons of the mission, many relapse into sin, and very many fall into tepidity. A new mission will renew the fervor of the tepid, and will restore God's grace to those who have relapsed. But it is not true that repeated missions do not produce much fruit. For although in the second mission the people do not manifest so much compunction as in the first, the fruit is notwithstanding very great. For, as I have already said, many who have returned to their former bad habits rise again from sin, many who became tepid begin again to serve God with fervor, and many are more firmly established in the practice of virtue. Hence, to renew the fervor and resolution of the people, the missionaries of our little Congregation usually return after some months to the place in which they have given missions. And we have learned by experience the great advantages which flow from these renewals.

I have said enough; I only entreat your Lordship to continue with your wonted zeal to procure every three years a mission for every village in your diocese. Do not attend to the objections of those who speak against the missions through interested motives or through ignorance of the great advantages of the missions. I also pray you to oblige the

pastors and priests of the villages to continue the exercises recommended to them by the missionaries, such as common mental prayer in the church, visit to the Blessed Sacrament, familiar sermons every week, the Rosary, and other similiar devotions. For it frequently happens that, through the neglect of the priests of the place, the greater part of the fruit produced by the mission is lost. I recommend myself to your prayers and remain,

Your very devoted and obedient servant,

ALPHONSUS MARIA,

Bishop of St. Agatha.

Index.

INDEX

TO THE

LETTERS OF ST. ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI.

A

ABBRUZZI, spiritual destitution of the, I. 141.

ABELLY, Louis, the saint praises his theology, III. 451.

ABUSES, in the Church to be corrected, III. 57; difficulty of removing them in monasteries, I. 108; from small beginnings they become great, II. 417; introduce relaxation, III. 285; religious damned for introducing, III. 286; means to be employed in removing certain abuses, I. 168, II. 99.

ACADEMIES OF MORAL THEOLOGY, how conducted, V. 229, 256–257; the saint establishes them throughout his diocese, V. 282.

AFFLICTION renders souls dear to God, I. 77.

ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI, ST., how God called him from the world, I. 319:—

AUTHOR: he does not write to acquire a name, I. 337, IV. 335, 338; but to promote the glory of God, IV. 44, 69, 81, V. 68, 124, and the triumph of the truth, IV. 264. His solicitude for sound doctrine, IV. 34, 35, 44. He is willing to retract his opinions when convinced of error, II. 151, IV. 268, 379. He retracts many opinions, I. 337, III. 133, IV. 63 (*Works of the Saint*). His horror of lax opinions, II. 185. He is more inclined to severity than to Laxism, IV. 405, 406, 421, 438, V. 149; is one of the most rigid of the Probabilists, IV. 156, 161. A clear writer, IV. 343, V. 112; not a friend of wordiness, IV. 73, 122, 177. He refutes his adversaries without passion, V. 91. He is constantly

reading and always finds something new to add to his *Moral Theology*, IV. 179. He does not disdain to insert the writings of others, IV. 235. Even during the printing he makes extensive corrections, IV. 107, 140, 142, 401. His ascetical works are sought after everywhere, IV. 73 (*Laxism*).

Bishop: his dread of the episcopate, I. 80, 184. He accepts it out of obedience, IV. 185, 189; but is sorely afflicted, II. 5, 6. He faithfully performs its duties, II. 114, 364, III. 63; V. 282–287; wishes to preach in every part of his diocese, II. 18. The affairs of the episcopate keep him constantly employed, IV. 192, 195, 219, 221. Continual anxiety and scruples, II. 93, 112–113, 145–146, 387, III. 62–63. His motto, II. 342. He petitions Clement XIII. to permit him to resign, II. 187; Pius VI., III. 102, who accepts his resignation, III. 109 (*Virtues, zeal of the Saint*).

Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer: he founds it under obedience, I. 43, 162, to please God, II. 262, without other support than God, I. 57; his ardor to begin the foundation, I. 27; asks prayers for its success, I. 26; encounters opposition from the beginning, I. 30; asks prayers to obtain subjects, I. 78, 81, 85, 87, 89. He blesses all the members of the Congregation, present and future, III. 33; his sentiments toward those who abandon the Congregation, II. 163, 164; he awaits them at the day of judgment, II. 402; he endeavors to have the Brief of Approbation inserted in the *Bullarium* of Benedict XIV., V. 78, 81, 83, 86 (*Congregation*).

Missionary: he would consider himself lost if he abandoned the missions, I. 80 (*Virtues, zeal for the missions*).

Spiritual Director: he requires of his penitents obedience, I. 241. 477, 494, 555, 578, II. 215, 267, 272, 275, 278, 437; fidelity to prayer, I. 63, 65, 578, II. 276, and other pious exercises in spite of tepidity, I. 384, 397, II. 363, 414; attention to spiritual reading, I. 63, II. 285; love of retirement and silence, I. 63, 78, 323, II. 255–256; devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, I. 64, 108, to the Passion of Jesus Christ, II. 410, 462, 512, and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, I. 63, 78, 290, 578; frequent reception of holy Communion, I. 103, 456, II. 248, 269, 276, 285, 291, 298, 314, 343; mortification, I. 63, 82, 456, II. 267, 305; love of contempt and persecution, I. 86, 323, 356, 431, 440, 456, 578, II. 102, 149, 363; detachment from relatives, II. 310, and from all things, I. 554, III. 283; promptness in rising with courage after a fault, I. 64, 578 (*Faults*); conformity to the will of God, I. 241, 444, II. 423 (*Conformity*); constancy in praying for the

Church (*Church*); for the souls in purgatory and for sinners, I. 74, 77, III. 285, 289, 464 (*Rule of Life*).

SUPERIOR OF THE CONGREGATION: he accepts out of obedience, I. 162, diligence in discharging his duties, I. 515–516, III. 137 (*Virtues, zeal for regular observance*); charity toward his subjects, I. 275, 341 (*Virtues*); severity toward delinquents, I. 253, 258, 349, 413–414, 422; he fears more for the Congregation on account of faults than from persecution (*Inobservance*); his solicitude for for the temporal welfare of the Congregation (*Interests*).

SUPERNATURAL GIFTS: he cures F. Saverio Rossi by a miracle, I. 325; effects the cure of his niece Maria Teresa with a picture of the Madonna, III. 457; foretells to F. Antonio Tannoia a long life of great bodily suffering, I. 330, the death of Giovanni Puoti, II. 107, an incurable sickness to Sister Maria Maddalena Desio, II. 423; knows supernaturally of the death of Brother Francesco Tartaglione, III. 18; the recovery of the Marquis Carlo de Marco, V. 29; assists miraculously at the death of Clement XIV, III. 49.

VIRTUES: CONFORMITY TO THE DIVINE WILL, in adversity, I. 297, 594, II. 502, III. 132; in interior trials, I. 15, 16; in sickness, II. 297, 303, 307, 348, III. 428, 433–434; in the dismemberment of the Congregation, III. 375, 412; in the threatened ruin of the house at Girgenti, II. 336, 460, of the entire Congregation, III. 156. He wishes to live and die doing the will of God, III. 354; composes a hymn upon —, I. 297.

FAITH, he continually prays for the preservation of the —, V. 164.

FORTITUDE, in his resolutions, II. 58, 204; in punishing delinquents, I. 258, 410–411, 436–437, 446, 499, II. 309, 367, 513–514 (*Disobedience, Paschal Precept*); in directing tepid souls, I. 431, 439–440, 467–468, II. 339; in excluding the unworthy from ecclesiastical benefices, II. 101, and from Holy Orders, II. 284 (*Virtues, zeal of the Saint*).

GRATITUDE, to God, I. 458, V. 27, for sickness and sufferings, II. 289, 310, 323, 326, 337, IV. 414, 458 (*Humiliations*), for the establishment of the Congregation in the Pontifical States, III. 192, 195; toward men, III. 216, IV. 18, 105, V. 55, 165, 172.

HOPE, confidence in prayer, I. 16, III. 105; of obtaining eternal salvation, III. 464; of the preservation of the Congregation, I. 58, 59; amid presecutions, III. 202; in temporal affairs, I. 274, III. 190.

HUMILITY, in advancing his opinions (*Alphonsus, Author, Humiliations*); in receiving correction, III. 234; he believes his love

toward God cold, I. 111, II. 270, that he has done nothing for God, I. 600; has more faults than others, I. 386; is an ignoramus, I. 40, a wretch, I. 64, 294, 463, II. 125, 349, 411, III. 374, IV. 69, 73, 204, a sinner, IV. 314; fears for his salvation on account of his sins, III. 457, 464; attributes to his pride the failure to obtain the civil approbation of the Congregation, I. 287; will not let his portrait be taken, IV. 176, 204, V. 16.

JUSTICE, in conferring benefices, II. 123, 140, 340, 457, 478; ignores recommendations, V. 206; scrupulousness in keeping contracts, III. 219, 220 (*Pension*).

LOVE OF GOD: he desires to belong entirely to Jesus Christ, I. 34, 73, to love him, I. 111, and to see him loved by others, II. 292; happy to spread his love, II. 323; in everything he seeks only the will of God, I. 24, 85, 190, 316, 433, II. 188, 255, 299, 344, 349, 416, III. 116, 412, 425; ready to lay down his life rather than tell a lie, V. 118.

LOVE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN: he constitutes her his heiress, I. 158; to spread devotion to her the *Glories of Mary* must be printed before the rest of his works, IV. 122; he fosters novenas to her, III. 174; preaches every Saturday in her honor (*Blessed Virgin*).

LOVE OF HIS NEIGHBOR, II. 122, 330, IV. 71; toward the agonizing, I. 493; for the houses of the Congregation in temporal distress, I. 432, 445, 587, II. 405, 506; toward those in prison, II. 48, 218, 334, 335, 353; his censors, II. 360; the members of the Congregation, I. 111, 275, 332, 341, 510; the novices, I. 597–600; he loves his brethren more than his brothers according to the flesh, II. 493, frequently prays for them, I. 250, III. 34, solicitous to preserve their vocation, I. 111, 245, 600, II. 70–76, 365, 415, III. 22, 51 (*Melchionna*), their bodily health, I. 211, 265, 417–420, 427, 449, 469, III. 26, 275; toward his sick brethren, I. 259, 285, 325, II. 60 (*Sick*); toward magdalens, II. 359, 503, III. 44; toward enemies (*Revenge*); toward his relatives (*Liguori*); toward sinners (*Virtues, zeal for the missions*); toward the poor, II. 63, 68, 304 (*Famine*); toward the scrupulous and afflicted, I. 575, 589, 592, II. 189–198, 330–331 (*Remondini*); toward his servant (*Pollio*).

OBEDIENCE, to his spiritual director, I. 82, II. 300, IV. 412, with regard to mortifications, II. 152, 163, 166, to residence, II. 129, the resignation of his See, II. 365, 416, III. 62; submission to the civil authority, III. 167; hopes to become a saint through obedience, I. 44.

PATIENCE, amid scruples, I. 41–42; in disagreeable occurrences, IV. 201, 246 (*Revisers*, *Government*, *Persecution*).

POVERTY, scrupulous observance of the vow, III. 438, 452.

PRUDENCE, will not be guided by revelations but by obedience, I. 44; proceeds without passion, II. 144; in matters of importance takes counsel of prudent men, I. 180–181, II. 41, III. 73, 74, 75, 126, 231, IV. 69, especially with regard to resigning his See, II. 110, 112–116, 372, III. 62–63; human means to be employed discreetly, III. 90, 176. He waits for a favorable opportunity to give correction, I. 479; in giving commands, II. 496; in permitting mortifications, II. 339.

TENDERNESS, grieved at having to use harshness, I. 33.

ZEAL, V. 282, 305, praised by the Sacred Congregation of the Council, V. 287, 306; for the missions, II. 21, 28–29, 327, 384, 397, 408, 434–435, 439, III. 46–47, 67, 301, V. 282, 284, 324; for regular observance, I. 147, 194, 277, 338–339, 457, 483, 519–520, 529, 551, II. 67, 85–86, 88–91, 99, 138, 222, 257, 391, 428, 485, III. 298–300, 476–484; for the removal of scandals, II. 38, 45, 59, 95, 114, 145, 152, 176, 206, 261, 274, 302, 373, 387, 498, III. 39, 81, V. 327; for the rights of the episcopal *mensa*, II. 81, 148, 159, 207, 268, 344, 447 (*Alphonsus*, *Bishop*, *Superior*, *Betrothed*, *Circulars*, *Parents*, *Parish Priests*).

ALOYSIUS, GONZAGA, ST., a martyr of divine love, I. 76.

AMARANTE, F. Biagio, C. SS. R., I. 167, 429, 594.

AMENDOLARA, F. Pasquale, C. SS. R., I. 221, 224, 402.

AMORT, F. Eusebius, IV. 300.

ANDREW AVELLINO, ST., most zealous for regular observance, I. 495.

ANGEL GUARDIAN never abandons the soul confided to him, I. 585.

ANGELIS DE, F. Nicodemo, C. SS. R., I. 247.

ANGELO, ST., A CUPOLO, the poverty of this foundation, II. 242; approved by the Holy See, I. 365 (*Pacca*).

ANGIOLA DEL CIOLA, Mother, Redemptoristine, I. 13–14.

ANSALONE, F. Giambattista, C. SS. R., I. 405, 423.

ANTOINE, S. J., author of a rigid Moral Theology, V. 15.

APICE, F. Bernardo, C. SS. R., I. 274, 343, 364, 366, 370; appointed to collect particulars concerning F. Cafaro, I. 297; delivers the funeral oration of F. Cafaro, I. 298; his death, II. 369.

ARCIERO, VEN. MARIANO, II. 408.

ARIDITY, (*Desolation*).

ARNAULD, Louis, founder of the house at Scifelli, II. 477, 484.

B

Baptism, the fate of infants who die without, V. 118.

Bartolino, D. Pasquale, II. 525.

Basnage, Samuel de Flottemanville, the desire of the saint to see him refuted, II. 80, 87.

Benedict XIV., the saint dedicates to him the second edition of the *Moral Theology*, I. 314, IV. 16. He receives the first volumne, I. 314, also the second, I. 367, IV. 16. The saint's eulogy of, IV. 17–18. The saint asks him to sanction the establishment of a foundation at Iliceto, I. 145; to approve the Congregation, I. 199–202; to grant the Congregation a communication in the privileges of the Pious Workers, I. 368. The pontiff approves the Congregation, I. 26, 213, and endeavors to have it approved by the King of Naples, I. 369, III. 395, IV. 43. He praises the doctrine of the saint, I. 315, 369, IV. 162.

Benefices, ecclesiastical, should be conferred on the most deserving. III. 60, V. 330–338, 342. Is it good to seek benefices to which the care of souls is attached, III. 469. Justice of the saint in conferring, II. 123, 140, 340, 457, 478. He recommends an ecclesiastic for a, III. 362.

Benevento: the saint gives a mission there, I. 402, IV. 24; makes a foundation there, I. 368, 371, III. 187, 190–191, 217, 218, V. 155. Anxiety of the saint on account of the contract, III. 219–220. The best of the houses of the Congregation, III. 267.

Benincasa, the Hermitesses of Sister Orsola, II. 178, 214.

Bergamo, Mgr. Carlo, Bishop of Gaeta. The saint implores his mediation to put an end to the division of the Congregation, III. 375. Writes to him concerning the good government of his diocese, V. 323–328.

Berruyer, S. J., his errors refuted by the saint, V. 19, 30.

Berti, O. S. A., a learned man, IV. 251, but censurable in some matters, III. 498, V. 29. The saint refutes his system on *Grace*, IV. 423.

Betrothed: parish priests should not attend the plighting of troth unless the marriage is soon to take place, V. 220, 226, 248. Excommunication against parents and heads of families who allow familiarities between, V. 221, 226, 246, 253. Religious instruction required of, V. 241, 245.

Bianchi, (Societa dei), the saint a member of this society, III. 471.

Bishops: the saint's teaching with regard to their obligation of re-

sidence, V. 331. Counsels for the good government of a diocese, V. 323–328 (*Alphonsus, Bishop, Sersale*). God blesses their preaching in an especial manner, I. 328, V. 324. The saint praises the work entitled *The Bishop Consoled*, IV. 19 (*Iorio*).

BLASPHEMERS, severity of the saint toward, II. 527.

BLASPHEMY, of the Saints, made a reserved case by the saint, V. 327.

BLASUCCI, F. Pietro Paolo, C. SS. R., I. 260, 303, 498, 590, held in high esteem by the saint, III. 146, 156, IV. 428.

BLESSED VIRGIN: salvation difficult without a special devotion to, V. 255. Devotion to Mary a sure pledge of Paradise, I. 24. He who dies invoking her cannot be lost, I. 559. The greatest pleasure we can afford her is to love Jesus, I. 26. The saint preaches in her honor every Saturday, V. 284; fosters this practice in his diocese, V. 221, 283. A sermon in her honor never to be omitted on our missions and other exercises, III. 447–448. V. 190, 197. Fasting in her honor on Saturdays (*Fasting*). The saint has recourse to her in the various troubles of the Congregation, II. 389, 392; hopes for the reunion of the Congregation from her, III. 416.

BONAVENTURA, (BLESSED) di Potenza, a worker of miracles, III. 274.

BONAVENTURA, Francesco Antonio, Bishop of Nusco, I. 304.

BOOKS, the saint desires moderation in purchasing, I. 398, II. 219, 506. Usefulness of spiritual — in times of aridity, II. 226, 383. His zeal against bad—II. 135.

BORGIA, Niccolo, Bishop of Cava, I. 260, afterward of Aversa, II. 151, a man of God and an able spiritual director, I. 395, deserves well of the Congregation, II. 94, III. 90.

BRANCONE, Marquis Gaetano, Secretary of State, is favorably inclined toward the Congregation, I. 177, 179, 180, 269, 314, 488. He wishes to renounce his station to attend to the affairs of his soul, I. 272.

BUILDING, advice to the Superiors in this matter, I. 352, II. 219, III. 80, 242. The advice of the architect must be followed, II. 141, 143.

BUONAMANO, F. Francesco, C. SS. R., I. 220, 268.

BUONAPANE, F. Fabio, C. SS. R., I. 530, II. 422.

BUONAPANE, Br. Vincenzo, C. SS. R., I. 601.

BUSENBAUM, Hermann, S. J. The saint a commentator of his *Medulla*, IV. 6, praises his method, IV. 219, V. 544, wishes to eliminate his text from the *Moral Theology*, IV. 206, 209, 216, V. 38. His reasons for not doing so, IV. 218, 220, 223, V. 40, 44–45, 56; is opposed to many of his opinions, IV. 406, V. 17, 91.

C

CAFARO, F. Paolo, C. SS. R., I. 297, spiritual director of the saint, I. 298; a man dead to his own will, I. 229. The saint orders prayers for his recovery, I. 292–297; writes his Life which he calls *admirable*, IV. 202, 215.

CAIONE, F. Gasparo, C. SS. R., I. 342, 348, 353, II. 144, 155, III. 153.

CANONS, their duties, V. 235, 241–244, 311–314.

CAPOSELE, the saint petitions the King to establish a foundation there, I. 166; grants power of attorney to F. Sportelli in the matter, I. 186. The *exequatur* is granted, I. 172. Poverty of this foundation, I. 459–460, II. 233. The revenge of the Saints, I. 390.

CAPRIOLI, F. Pasquale, C. SS. R., I. 325, 376, 400.

CARAFA, Cardinal, III. 48.

CARAFA, Prince Francesco, Lord of Villa degli Schiavi, I. 91, 96.

CARAFA, Sister Brianna, II. 178, 180, 186.

CARDINALS should be learned men, III. 56, 59.

CARLO III., not in favor of the Congregation, I. 269, 488. Banishes the Jesuits from his realm, II. 212.

CARMELITES, Discalced, of Ripacandida, the saint's esteem for them. I. 237, 251, 256, 317. He refuses them a Father as extraordinary confessor, I. 277; exhorts them to maintain the Rule of St. Teresa, I. 278.

CARO, Gaetano di, a secular priest helps the Fathers on the missions. I. 140.

CASAMARI, Monastery of, II. 477, 488.

CASATI, Canon, founder of the house at Iliceto, I. 136.

CASELLE, Giuseppe, I. 478, 480.

CASES, RESERVED, the saint refuses to grant faculties for them during Paschal time, II. 84; but grants them most willingly during the missions. II. 166, 440.

CASTELLANETA, the prince of, asks for a mission at Iliceto, I. 136, 142.

CASTELLI, Cardinal Giuseppe Maria, II. 412, III. 57. The saint has recourse to him concerning the resignation of his See. III. 100.

CAVALIERI, Anna Maria, the mother of the saint, I. 400.

CAVALIERI, Emilio, Bishop of Troia, II. 156.

Celano, Gaetano, II. 388, 390; a very able lawyer, III. 105, 207.
Celestina, Maria del divino amore, Redemptoristine, III. 282, 283, 288.
Ceprano, projected foundation of a house there, II. 528, 529, III. 6, 7, 13, 36, 45.
Cerchia, Giuseppe, the saint exhorts him to leave the world, I. 50–56.
Chant, Figured, a great abuse in monasteries, I. 151, 169, 170, III. 449.
Chantal, St. Jaen Frances de, endured desolation of spirit forty-one years, II. 225, 293.
Chase, the saint abolishes this abuse among his clergy, V. 209, 258.
Children, duties toward parents, I. 584.
Church, persecution of the, IV. 402; pitiable condition of—in 1774, III, 72–73 (*Abuses*). The saint prays and has prayers said for the, I. 217, 272, 286, 294, III. 58–59, 72, IV. 398, V. 164, 167.
Churches, built and renovated by the saint. II. 50, V. 278–279, 303, 316 (*Parishes*).
Ciceri, Abbate, grants to the saint the right of nomination to a chaplaincy, I. 526, II. 431.
Cicibeism, II. 12, III. 384–385.
Gimino, F. Fabrizio, C. SS. R., I. 418, 421, 425, II. 69, 465, V. 156.
Ciorani, I. 79, 85; reasons for establishing a house there, II. 235. Poverty of this foundation, I. 460, II. 233, 238, 244.
Circulars of the saint to the members of the Congregation, I. 248, 266, 331, 413, 461, 466, 489, 507, 512, 519, 590, 597; II. 138, 177, 221, 336, 375, 379, 391, 399, 489, 499, 503; III. 29, 122, 164, 298, 301, 309, 315, 325, 363, 476.
Cito, D. Baldassare, President of the Royal Council, the saint begs him to protect the Congregation, II. 262, 385.
Clement XIII., his letter to the saint on the Jesuits, II. 126; grief at the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain, II. 212, 220, and from the kingdom of Naples, II. 265. The saint dedicates to him his *Defence*, IV. 290; expresses to him the desire to resign the bishopric, II. 187.
Clement XIV., the saint dedicates to him the work on the *Council of Trent*, IV. 429, and the *Translation of the Psalms*, V. 95; shares the afflictions of the Pope, III. 27–28; and assists him at the hour of death, III. 49.
Clement, Blessed (*Hofbauer*).
Clergy, condition of—in Naples in 1754, I. 327–328.

Clerics, rules of conduct for, V. 233–234, 247–248 (*Ordinandi*, *Seminarists*). May a cleric addicted to sin be ordained? — the saint at first affirmed, IV. 14, but afterward denies, I. 337.

Colombiere, Claude de la, S. J., made a vow always to go against his own will, I. 335.

Comedies not to be tolerated in monasteries, II. 183.

Communion, Holy, wonderful effects of, I. 26, 236, 237; a pledge of perseverance, I. 397, II, 298. The age at which children should receive, V. 218, 225, 245.

Communities, the inconvenience of small, I. 93; of large, III. 28.

Concina, F. Daniele, O. P., very rigorous in his opinions, IV. 29; too lax in some matters, I. 572.

Confessions, General, injurious for certain souls, I. 65.

Confessors, should continually study Moral Theology, V. 252., foster the practice of mental prayer and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, V. 255. Manner of acting with those who live in the occasion of sin, and relapsing sinners, V. 221, 254, 255 (*Betrothed*); with those who confess venial sins only, I. 409, V. 254. Further recommendations with regard to their duties, V. 252–256. Should not be troubled about the confessions they have heard, III. 11. Confessors of nuns should be changed every three years, II. 17. Members of the Congregation cannot be — of nuns (*Direction of Nuns*). The saint approves none without examination, II. 31, 205 442, V. 318; suspends all during the missions, II. 24. Importance of chosing a good confessor, III. 460, 463; who should not easily be changed, III. 485 (*Director*).

Confidence in God, should be greater than our fear, I. 170.

Conformity to the divine will, in this consists all perfection, II. 363; gives perfect peace, I. 85, II. 423. We should ask it of God in all our troubles, II. 414; and always practise it, I. 362, II. 186–187 (*Resignation*, *Alphonsus*, *Virtues*).

Confraternities, the saint establishes one for ecclesiastics in Benevento, I. 403; wishes to see them among his clergy, II. 25, 29; for gentlemen, young men, and young girls, II. 29, 30, 37. The members should pay no monthly contribution, II. 32. The saint abhors the so-called lay confraternities, V. 277–278.

Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer: the object of—the imitation of Jesus Christ, I. 70, the giving of missions, II. 505, particularly to those living in the country, I. 119, 135 182, 200, 270, II. 231, III. 39, 141, 162, 239, IV. 16, 430; and of retreats to the clergy, candidates for ordination, and seculars, I. 135, 201

(*Foreign Missions*). The government of, I. 162; this form the best, III. 354. Its houses situated at a distance from inhabited places, I. 183, 202, 209, 564. The approbation of—by the Holy See (*Benedict XIV*). Solicitude of the saint to secure the royal approbation, I. 177–184, 198, 270; which is granted with many limitations, I. 274, II. 232, 420, III. 378, 394, 432. Civilly incapacitated from possessing anything, I. 454, II. 232, 419. The saint endeavors to obtain the uncondit onal approbation, I. 451; uses the mediation of the Pope (*Benedict XIV*), and seeks the intercession of the Queen, I. 286, 305, 310, 313, 319. Poverty of—, II. 233–234, 391, 420, III. 66, 186. Persecutions of—, I. 269, II. 389, III. 73, 85, 132, 135, 164, 202 (*Sarnelli*, *Persecutions*, *Maffei*). Jesus Christ loves it as the apple of his eye, III. 32; works miracles in its favor, III. 296. God who called it into being will preserve it, III. 9, 78, even to the end of time, I. 314. It will prosper so long as regular observance is maintained, I. 147. The good it is doing in the Church, I. 249, 270, 311, 452–453, II. 231, 399, III. 29, 30, 104. Privileges granted to, I. 459. Condition of, in 1748, I. 200–201; in 1758, V. 353; in 1777, III. 238, 239.

CONSCIENCE, manifestation of (*Superiors of the Congregation*). How a Superioress should act in conducting, III. 290.

CONSOLATIONS, spiritual, how they are to be received, II. 516.

CONTALDI, D. Francesco, founder of the house at Pagani, active subsequently in its destruction, I. 141, 181.

CONTRADICTION, unavoidable in community life, I. 526; usefulness of, II. 203; manner of acting toward those who contradict us, III. 19, 20.

CORATO, negotiations for a foundation there, I. 573, 579, II. 64–65.

CORPO, F. Francesco del, C. SS. R., II. 174.

CORRADO, Bartolomeo, his refutation of F. Patuzzi, II. 470, IV. 296, 304.

CORRADO, F. Bartolomeo Mattia, C. SS. R., I. 548, 570, II. 402.

CORRECTION, manner of giving, I. 75; without passion, I. 339, II. 220, 227; in private, I. 339, II. 220, 227, 417. Obligation of Superiors to give, II. 393; to omit it should it cause greater confusion, II. 476 (*Superiors of the Congregation*).

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION, subject to the inspection of the Superior, I. 461, 491, except when pertaining to matters of conscience, I. 461. A disorder to be guarded against in, I. 403.

Costanzo, F. Giambattista di, C. SS. R., III. 226, 448, 451.
Criscuoli, F. Diodato, C. SS. R., II. 210, 496.
Critics, their usefulness in a Community, I. 525.
Cross, the advantages of, I. 487; the safest way I. 487, the surest and shortest road to eternal salvation, III. 453 (*Sufferings, Trials*).
Crostarosa, Sister Maria Celeste, the saint humbles her severely, I. 31–41; founds a monastery at Foggia, I. 169.
Crucifix, upon the altar should be large, V. 237, 259.
Crucifixion, the saint has a picture of—carried in procession to promote love for Jesus Christ, III. 93.
Crusade, the saint commissioned to propagate the, III. 315–321.
Cursing the dead, opinion of the saint as to the gravity of, IV. 3–5.

D

Deists, triumphant in France, Flanders, and Italy, V. 120; have ruined Europe, V. 124.
Demons, cannot hurt us, II. 214; we should not fear them, II. 216. Rules for confessors with regard to penitents annoyed by, V. 347–348.
Desio, Sister Maria del Crocifisso, II. 422.
Desolation, manner of acting in, I. 360, 377–378, 552, II. 216, 293, 298, 315, 343, 383, 425, 462, III. 289, 464, 486 (*Rule of Life*); unites us to God, II. 254, 263–264, 409; the fire of—consumes the rust of past faults, I. 384; Jesus Christ places this cross upon many, II. 293.
Detachment, an effect of the love of God, I. 309; must be entire in order to find God, I. 50; —from self-will most necessary, II. 328. "God, God and nothing more! Oh, happy the soul that speaks thus!" II. 349.
Dignities, ecclesiastical, should be accepted when imposed by obedience, III. 147.
Direction of nuns, spiritual, forbidden to the members of the Congregation, I. 444, 483. Exceptions to this rule, II. 208, 212, 222, III. 219.
Director, Spiritual, reasons for having a—, II. 368; danger of being without a—, I. 36, 37; makes known to us the will of God, I. 44, 236, II. 437. Detachment from the, II. 516, III. 283; we should be resigned if God takes him from us, II. 368, III. 70.

Jesus Christ our first, II. 160; it is he who takes the—from us, I. 255 (*Alphonsus*).

Disobedience, severity of the saint in punishing, I. 349, III. 326; an injury to the work of the missions, III. 165.

Dispensation, necessary at times in every human law, I. 164, II. 212; in the observance of the Rule, III. 503. Conditions required for a dispensation from the vows in the Congregation, I. 424, 505, 512, II. 165, 365.

Distraction in prayer (*Meditation*).

Duelling (*Ferdinand IV*).

E

Ecclesiastics, zeal of the saint for the behavior and dress of, V. 227, 263–264, 292–295, 297–298, 299–300, 313, 320 (*Chase*, *Games*).

Enclosure, punishment inflicted by the saint for violating, II. 367.

End of the world, a sign which the saint thinks foreshadows, V. 124.

Equiprobabilism of St. Alphonsus, IV. 203, 369, V. 47, 48; his reasons for maintaining it, IV. 251. Exposition of, IV. 418–421, 424–429, V. 132–133; time taken to establish, V. 89–90 (*Probabilism*, *Probabiliorism*).

Erudition, vain and useless, not desired in the Congregation, I. 404.

Excommunication (*Betrothed*).

Exercises, Spiritual, recommended by the saint, I. 157, 203, 321 (*Rule of Life*, *Superioress of Nuns*, *Superiors of the Congregation*). Manner in which they are to be made by the members of the Congregation, III. 167. Manner of conducting—for ecclesiastics, V. 197–203; for young women, II. 30, 31, 32; for young men, II. 32.

F

Falcoia, Tommaso, Bishop of Castellamare, spiritual director of the saint, I. 28, 46; endowed with the gift of miracles, III. 344.

Famine, sad consequences of—in the Kingdom of Naples in 1764. II. 63, 70, IV. 253–254, 264; charity of the saint during, II. 66, 68, 73.

Fasting, does not extend to the drinking of wine, II. 117–118; on bread and water on Saturdays recommended to the members of the Congregation, I. 529, II. 177, 257.

Faults, after committing, we should rise at once, I. 316, 588, II. 93, 194, 414 (*Alphonsus, Spiritual Director*). Injury they cause even when slight, I. 267, II. 401, III. 31. The saint fears them more than persecutions, II. 227, 257, 258, 399, III. 78, 124, 170 (*Inobservance*); he declares those against charity, obedience, humility, and poverty insufferable, I. 333, 340, 515, II. 486 (*Disobedience*).

Fazzano, Brother Mattia, C. SS. R., I. 438, II. 356.

Fear of God gives peace and joy, I. 256.

Ferdinand IV., King of Naples, favorably inclined toward the Congregation, III. 465. The saint petitions for concessions with regard to the *Regolamento*, III. 397–399; exhorts him to suppress duelling, V. 307; defends his manner of conferring benefices, V. 330.

Ferrara, F. Girolamo, C. SS. R., I. 172–175, 416, II. 258, IV. 392.

Filingeri, Serafino, Archbishop of Palermo, II. 325, subsequently of Naples, III. 134.

Fiocchi, F. Carmine, C. SS. R., I. 282–283.

Fiore, F. Ignazio, C. SS. R., I. 262, 527.

Fiorillo, F. Luigi, O. P., a great friend of the saint and the Congregation, I. 70, 93.

Flowers, the saint's love of, II. 8–9.

Foggia, the apparition of the countenance of the Blessed Virgin from the image, III. 247.

Foundation of a monastery: how it should be begun in order to secure perfect observance, I. 106–108.

Frosinone, foundation there, III. 150–151, V. 155, approved by the Holy See, III. 198, 199; very dear to the saint, V. 348.

Fusco, Giambattista, I. 329.

G

Gaiano, F. Carlo, C. SS. R., I. 588; II. 258; his niece Chiara, I. 577, 588.

Galiano, Mgr. Celestino, Grand Almoner, I. 180, 182, 452.

Gallo, F. Salvatore, C. SS. R., I. 204, 252, III. 349.

GAMES, the saint forbids his clergy to take part in, V. 212, 236–237, 239, 258, 298.

GARZIA, F. Biagio, C. SS. R., II. 398, 427.

GERARD, (BLESSED) MAJELLA, C. SS. R., I. 345, 386. The saint gathers material to write a Life of—, I. 408, 487; his portrait, I. 487.

GIOVENALE, F. Francesco, C. SS. R., I. 293.

GIRGENTI, house of the Congregation there, I. 563–564, II. 301, 311, 320; poverty of this foundation, II. 449; dear to the saint, II. 428, III. 235, 249; his anxiety to prevent the expulsion of the Fathers, II. 449, 459, 467, 481. A fixed and permanent domicile prohibited, III. 228 (*Sicily*).

GISONE, F. Gerardo, C. SS. R., I. 398, 423, 501.

GIULIANO, F. Pasquale, C. SS. R., I. 571.

GOVERNMENT, NEAPOLITAN: Its interference in ecclesiastical affairs: decrees against the Church fall as thick as snowflakes, II. 429; denies the *exequatur* to the Apostolic Bulls nominating Bishops, II. 372, III. 112; interferes in the conferring of benefices, V. 322, 331, 339, in the ordination of clerics, I. 524, III. 187, 493; prohibits free intercourse with Rome, III. 404, the holding of synods, V. 242, 287. Its attitude with regard to Religious Orders, III. 381.

Its interference in the affairs of the Congregation: denies the *exequatur* to the Pontifical Brief establishing the Congregation, III. 378–379, 432; utterly abhors the name Congregation, II. 65; will permit four houses only as simple associations, in which the priests shall live in common, II. 232–233, III. 303–304, 394; despoils it of all possessions, II. 232–233; arrogates to itself the administration of the Congregation, II. 233, 249–250, III. 432; assigns to the subjects a miserable pittance, II. 234, 253, and permits them as a favor to collect, II. 243, III. 399, 419; imposes its own *Regolamento* instead of the Rule approved by the Holy See, III. 403, 433–434; reluctantly permits the members to take the oaths instead of the vows, III. 397–398, 418–419; refuses to recognize its privileges, III. 89, 110; meddles with the vocation of postulants, I. 261, 283, 382, 385, 531, III. 467, 501; causes apprehension concerning the free transferring of subjects, III. 244, 250, the taking of money out of the Kingdom, II. 507, III. 198, 201, 204, 228, the accepting of bequests for missions, III. 179, 181–182, and even concerning the sending of diplomas of affiliation to benefactors, III. 151; causes many vexations, I. 186, III. 85–86, 395, 432–433.

GOVERNMENT, NEAPOLITAN:—
Its interference in matters of doctrine, IV. 465: the saint fears for his *Moral Theology*, IV. 390; danger of its prohibition, IV. 408, 415, 416; his teaching condemned as pernicious, and made a pretext to suppress the Congregation, III. 202, 205, 209, IV. 416, 417, V. 131; labors of the saint in its defence, IV. 210, 211 (*Laxism*). With regard to dogmatic works: the saint fears for his *Defence of the Infallibility and Power of the Pope*, IV. 355, 381–382, 388, 402, 403–404, 433, V. 126–127; he is obliged to have the *Refutation of Febronius* published outside the kingdom under an assumed name, IV. 397, 411; in order to avoid further annoyance he will not write any more scientific works, V. 33; evidences of treason sought in his *Ascetical Works* (*Works of St. Alphonsus, Sermons for Sundays, Censors, Simioli*).

GRACE, the saint recommends to his companions his System on, I. 566.

GRAZIOLI, F. Angelo Antonio, C. SS. R., I. 275.

GRAZIOLI, Benedetto, a benefactor of the Congregation, I. 223, 344; his two daughters become Carmelites, I. 237; circulates pictures of Br. Gerard Majella, I. 487.

H

HEATHEN, the obligation to preach the gospel to the, I. 60–62.

HOFBAUER, (BLESSED) CLEMENT MARIA, reception into the Congregation, II. 484.

HOLY SCRIPTURE, the reading of—in the vernacular not suitable for nuns, II. 456.

HONORS, in what those of a religious consist, I. 340.

HUMBLE, the, receive favors from the Heart of Jesus, III. 282.

HUMILIATIONS, graces that unite us to Jesus Christ II. 247, III. 30; gratitude of the saint to God for—, III. 456.

HUMILITY, in what it consists, I. 32.

I

ILARDO, Br. Michele, C. SS. R., III. 18.

ILICETO, foundation of this house, I. 137–138, 144, 145 (*Benedict XIII*); the poverty of, I. 138, 259, 400, 405, 432, 445, 447–448, II. 233; persecutions at (*Maffei*).

ILLUSION, even holy souls are exposed to—, I. 38–39; signs of—, I. 279.

IMITATION OF JESUS CHRIST (*Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*). The work of Thomas a Kempis highly prized by the saint, II. 260.

INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE, most dear to the saint, I. 534, IV. 357; the foundation-stone of the Church, V. 126; the saint defends the, V. 125–127 (*Government, Pope*).

INOBSERVANCE, the saint fears it more than persecutions, I. 248, II. 489 (*Faults*).

INQUIETUDE never comes from God, II. 181.

INSPECTOR, secret, his duty, I. 503.

INSTITUTES, why God raises up new religious, I. 206.

INTERESTS, material, the saint solicitous for the—of the Congregation, I. 142–143, 154–155, 350, 464–465, II. 332–334, III. 192–201, 208, 244, 264–265; —of a convent in his diocese, II. 518; — of the episcopal *mensa* (*Virtues, zeal of the Saint*).

IORIO, Giuseppe, I. 329, II. 30, IV. 14, 19; the author of *The Confessor in Hamlet and Village*, IV. 221, and of *The Bishop Consoled*, I. 329, IV. 19.

J

JESUITS, intimate friendship between them and the saint, I. 403, III. 499; have sanctified the world, I. 204 (*Society of Jesus*); are masters in Moral Theology, IV. 25, 29, 32. The saint does not accept all their opinions, IV. 162, 442, 453, V. 17, 28, 30; nor does he follow in *Probabilism* those who are too benign, IV. 405, 406, 408, 416, 438, 451, V. 17, 113, 124, 132 (*Probabilism*).

JUDGMENT, danger of relying on one's own, I. 36.

L

LAFFITEAU, Pierre Francois, Bishop of Sisteron, a vigorous opponent of Jansenism, I. 581.

LANZA, Antonio, Bishop of Girgenti, favorable to the Congregation, IV. 428, V. 28; the saint's regard for—, II. 398, 428, V. 31.

LATESSA, F. Angelo, C. SS. R., I. 230, 345.

LAWSUITS, aversion of the saint for, II. 159, 442, 445; his anxiety with regard to the Sarnelli—,II. 388–389, 402, 418, III. 211; his *Defences*, II. 230–246, 249–253, V. 131–150; success after twenty years of, III. 423.

LAXISM, the saint accused of, II. 312, 325, III. 132–133, 141; he composes his *Apology*, V. 131.

LAY-BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION: long trial before being permitted to receive the habit or make profession, I. 415, 416, 423; their habit, II. 499; their declaration of rights, II. 409–411; their duties, II. 414. Humility, the virtue most necessary for them, II. 413. Monthly retreat, III. 167 (*Siesta*).

LAZARISTS, the, I. 116, 351.

LECTORS, qualifications of—of Moral Theology in the Congregation, II. 161; regulations for, I. 484–485; the saint himself fills this position, V. 351.

LEGGIO, F. Isidoro, C. SS. R., I. 436, III. 345, 424.

LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE, ST., the saint petitions for his canonization, II. 10, 11.

LIFE, human, interwoven with flowers and thorns, I. 362.

LIGUORI, Alfonso de', nephew of the saint; good advice to, III. 340–342.

LIGUORI, D. Ercole de', brother of the saint; the saint asks his father to be more kind toward, I. 94; a proof of the saint's disinterestedness, I. 156; solicitous for his spiritual welfare, I. 157, II. 395; is recommended to marry a second time, II. 12–15.

LIGUORI, D. Giuseppe de', father of the saint; Alphonsus gives him salutary advice, I. 95, 120.

LIGUORI, Giuseppe de', nephew of the saint; the saint's anxiety to preserve his innocence, III. 306; gives him good advice, III. 340–342, 400, 431.

LIGUORI, Maria Teresa de', niece of the saint, a Benedictine nun; the paternal solicitude of the saint for her, II. 517, III. 236–237, 384, 385, 402, 417, 450, 451–452, 457–458, 460, 463, 485; miracles wrought in her favor, III. 457, 463.

LOUIS XV., King of France, his attempted assassination by Robert Damiens, IV. 79.

LOVE OF GOD, means to acquire, I. 554; he that loves God does not suffer, I. 440; how beautiful to love God in the midst of pains, and without sensible joy, II. 225, 256, and without consolation, II. 410; the way of love is the surest way for everyone, I. 355; a chain which binds us irrevocably to God, I. 598; excludes all

fear, III. 114. The love of a soul in this life is the same as in heaven, V. 116–117.

LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST, his love for us, I. 24, III. 29; he deserves all our love, II. 260, 267; the greatest of all works, III. 32; excludes all fear, and endures suffering with joy, II. 214. Means to obtain it: the consideration of his Passion, I. 336, II. 410, and of the love he bears us, I. 319; we should ask it continually of God, I. 336, III. 32, 273, 449; to endure suffering out of love, III. 490.

LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR, even more pleasing to God than humility, I. 77.

LUCCI, (VENERABLE) ANTONIO, Bishop of Bovino, approves the foundation at Iliceto, I. 137, 146; the saint obtains through his intercession the cure of the Marquis de Marco, V. 30.

M

MADDALONI, Duke of, II. 56, 67; the saint invokes his protection, II. 124, 268, 447.

MAFFEI, Francesco Antonio, an opponent of the Congregation at Iliceto, I. 479, 537, II. 218, 287, 288, 289–290, 385, IV. 391.

MAGLI, Canon of Martina, attacks the *Moral System* of the saint, II. 525, III. 24–25, V. 89.

MAIONE, F. Angelo, C. SS. R., I. 501, II. 351; the saint's regard for him, II. 41; charity toward him, III. 337. The principal author of the *Regolamento*, III. 331, 336, 344, 433.

MAJORINO, F. Gabriele, C. SS. R., III. 7–8.

MANFREDONIA, Francesco Antonio, I. 291, 346–349, V. 350–351.

MANNARINI, Vincenzo, I. 30, 40, 179, 185, 186.

MANSI, Giovanni Domenico, Archbishop of Lucca, joy of the saint in seeing the *Epitome* of—inserted in the *Moral Theology*, IV. 151, 217, 233, 235, 237.

MARCO, Marquis Carlo de, II. 481, III. 303–304, 400, 418.

MARGOTTA, F. Francesco, C. SS. R., I. 188, 194, 224, II. 94.

MARIA DE GESÙ, Carmelite nun, I. 236, 279–282.

MASS, HOLY. Recommendations and ordinances of the saint regarding the celebration of, V. 204, 211, 222; a grievous sin to say it in less than quarter of an hour, V. 200, 205, 211; he threatens such priests with suspension, V. 222, 257; a sacrilegious—

leads to damnation, II. 453; zeal of the saint for the celebration of the late Mass on feasts, V. 213, 229, 291, 297.

MATTEI, Saverio, the saint praises him, his regard for Alphonsus, V. 102–103.

MATTEIS, F. Pasquale, S. J., the saint's affection for the Society, I. 203–204, 546.

MAURO, D. Pasquale, II. 200.

MAZZINI, F. Giovanni, C. SS. R., I. 18, 147, 244, III. 54.

MEDITATION, manner of making, I. 74; time to be devoted to, I. 63, 496, 578; the subjects of, I. 64, II. 410; the prayer of seculars and that of religious, III. 123; all progress depends on, I. 65; the saint fosters the practice in his diocese, V. 283 (*Confessors*); that which is without sensible consolation best, I. 478; the desire of a soul in prayer should be to ascertain the will of God in order to fulfil it, II. 363; we should always ask for the love of Jesus Christ, I. 89, holy perseverance and conformity to God's will, II. 226; how to act under distractions, I. 74, 478; in aridity a book should be used, II. 383; with petitions and continual offering of one's self to God, I. 281, making a fixed number of acts of each kind, II. 313; value of the Prayer of Recollection, I. 360. Instruction for children in the manner of making, V. 215–217; short method of, I. 117.

MELACCIO, F. Donato, C. SS. R., I. 380, 402, II. 60, 62.

MELANCHOLY to be shunned as the plague, III. 490.

MELCHIONNA, F. Giuseppe, C. SS. R., I. 254, 559; charity of the saint toward him, I. 560, II. 70–76, 87, 121, 202.

MEO, F. Alessandro de, C. SS. R., I. 462, 485, 570, II. 80, 87, III. 458–459.

MERCY OF GOD great toward those who abandon sin, II. 16.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL, St, the *Novena* in his honor, III. 153.

MILDNESS with firmness in the government of the Congregation recommended by the saint, II. 220 (*Superiors of the Congregation*).

MINISTER, the, an official of the Congregation, various recommendations to, I. 519, III. 299.

MISSIONS, manner of giving, V. 183; beneficial to souls, III. 29–30; reason of their usefulness, I. 207–208, 249; should not be opened on a working day, III. 46; often useful to hold them in two churches, II. 21–30; should not be given in summer, III. 23. Letter to a Bishop on the utility of, V. 404; people must be fully satisfied with regard to their confessions, I. 361; extraordinary ceremonies, III. 93–98.

Missions, Foreign, the saint thinks of devoting himself to, I. 60; desires to send the subjects on, I. 507, 511, 521.

Missionaries, Rule of life for the, I. 492–493, III. 35, 123–124, V. 193–196 (*Superior of Missions*).

Mortification, censurable when practised against obedience, II. 120; to be omitted in sickness, II. 296, 305, 339.

Morza, F. Andrea, C. SS. R., I. 551.

Muscari, F. Giuseppe, C. SS. R., I. 215, 217, 243.

N

Naples, spiritual and temporal destitution of, II. 77, 272, III. 137, V. 31, 164, 167; spiritual renovation, III. 147; a purgatory for the saint, I. 178; the kingdom a plentiful harvest for the missionaries, III. 413.

Nepveu, Father, S. J., his treatise on the Love of Jesus Christ, I. 319.

Nicolai, Giuseppe, Archbishop of Conza, I. 187, 220, 519, 523; the saint dedicates the first edition of the *Moral Theology* to him IV. 5–12.

Nittoli, F. Giovanni, C. SS. R., I. 213.

Nonnotte, L'Abbe Claude Francois, the saint praises his work against Voltaire, III. 263, 268–270, V. 172.

Novenas, with daily sermons most useful, III. 174; greater mortification than usual ought to accompany, I. 63, II. 276; exercises of piety for, II. 415, III. 139.

Novices of the Congregation, the qualifications they should possess, I. 374; solicitude of the saint for their health, I. 291, 373; counsels for, I. 597–600.

Nuns, what they should be, II. 358; should love Jesus Christ as a spouse, I. 475; watch most cautiously over the affections of their heart and the observance of their vows, III. 473; neither seek offices nor refuse them, I. 306. Obligation with regard to the Divine Office, II. 184; obedience, prayer, poverty, the means of perfection, I. 256. Poverty and closed grates conduce to sanctity, I. 108. A good confessor maintains regular observance, II. 18; how they should act if he be wanting, II. 116–117. Advantage of insults borne for Jesus Christ, I. 588. Danger of admitting novices who have no vocation, I. 210; grievous sin of those who vote for their admission, II. 479. Various recommen-

dations to, II. 85–86, 88–91 (*Redemptoristines*). Exhortations to love Jesus Christ, I. 17, 24; books they should read, II. 456. Nuns in the diocese of Sant' Agata, III. 103, V. 276. State of the convents in the kingdom of Naples, II. 116–117 (*Abuses, Alphonsus, Spiritual Director, Holy Scripture, Observance, Parlor, Presents, Rule of Life*).

O

OATH. Is it a mortal sin to take an oath to an equivocal expression? V. 140, 143; does an oath sworn without the intention of taking it, bind? V. 148.

OBEDIENCE, the surest way of pleasing God, III. 68; of sanctifying one's self, I. 44; in it we find the will of God, II. 298, 490, III. 11; increases our merit, I. 334; is the source of many benefits, II. 490; its necessity for a Redemptorist, I. 426, III. 311, 325 (*Redemptorists*); to the physician (*Physician*); to the civil authority, III. 167.

OBSERVANCE, REGULAR, importance of, I. 147–148, 495–496; obligation of maintaining, I. 209, 495 (*Andrew Avellino, St*); the holiness of monasteries depends upon, I. 107, also that of individuals, I. 278, II. 149; difficult in small communities, I. 92; innovations imperceptibly destroy, III. 114.

OCCASIONS, DANGEROUS, to be shunned, II. 14; manner of acting toward those who live in, V. 221 (*Confessors*).

OFFICE, DIVINE, a most holy occupation, V. 95; manner of reciting in choir, V. 230–231, 233, 311; the saint asks for a commutation of, III. 83.

OFFICES, should be accepted when imposed by obedience, I. 372, 396, II. 328, 416.

OLIVA, Brother Antonio Maria, C. SS. R., II. 487–488.

OPINIONS, the saint wishes the members of the Congregation to follow the common, I. 485.

ORDINANDI, dispositions requisite, and means taken to ensure worthiness in the, V. 247, 259, 286, 305 (*Clerics, Seminarists*).

P

PACCA, Francesco, Archbishop of Benevento; a benefactor of the house of S. Angelo a Cupolo, I. 364, II. 242.

PAGANI, petition to the King in favor of the foundation, I. 119; enemies of the foundation, 120–124; the saint contemplates abandoning, I. 140–143; poverty of the foundation, I. 460, II. 233.

PAGANO, D. Tommaso, spiritual director of the saint, I. 60.

PAOLA, F. Francesco Antonio de, C. SS. R., I. 300, 363, 380, II. 483; receives Clement Maria Hofbauer into the Congregation, II. 484.

PARENTS, enemies of religious vocations, I. 212, II. 164, 221; severity of the saint toward those who neglect the Christian instruction of their children, V. 253, 328; toward those who allow dangerous company-keeping (*Betrothed*).

PARISHES, the saint erects new—in his diocese, II. 103, V. 269, 278, 280, 304, 317 (*Churches*).

PARISH PRIESTS, the saint stimulates their zeal, V. 282, 318; for the catechetical instruction of their people, V. 209, 212, 219, 221, 225, 244, 343. Their duties, II. 153, V. 206, 244–251, 349. How and what they should preach, V. 206–207, 244–251. Three times a year they should have a general Communion for the children, V. 220, 226, 247, and once a month secure one or more strange confessors for their people, V. 220, 226, 246 (*Betrothed*, *Confessors*, *Mass*, *Paschal Precept*, *Preaching*, *Priests*).

PARLOR to be shunned as much as possible, I. 82, 578, II. 180 (*Nuns*).

PASCHAL PRECEPT, severity of the saint in punishing delinquents, II. 381–382, 527; regulations in order that all may fulfil it, V. 220, 225, 246–247, and in a worthy manner, V. 219, 225–226.

PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST, the constant meditation of the Saints, II. 513; the saint recommends it (*Alphonsus*, *Spiritual Director*, *Redemptorists*).

PASSIONS, how we must combat, II. 266.

PASSIONISTS, THE, the saint desires that they be recieved cordially, III. 172; he petitions the Holy See for communication in their privileges, I. 368, III. 238–240.

PATUZZI, Vincenzo, O. P., a learned man, II. 525, IV. 251, 255, 259, V. 89; opposes the *Moral System* of the saint, IV. 250–260;

joy of the saint at this opposition, IV. 265. The *Replies* of the saint to, IV. 271–279.

PEACE, enjoyed only by those who seek God alone, II. 410; found in doing the will of God, II. 423, 490. Sources of—in a religious community, III. 491. The saint recommends it to his brethren (*Redemptorists*).

PENSION, the saint ask for one upon the renunciation of his See, III. 99; his petition granted, III. 115; his scruples with regard to accepting the sum assigned him by the government, III. 130.

PENTIMALLI, F. Francesco, C. SS. R., I. 426, 594.

PERFECTION, souls called to—expose themselves to eternal ruin by living in tepidity, I. 359–360 (*Sanctity*).

PERSECUTION, not an evil, I. 171, unites the soul to Jesus Christ, I. 588; how to bear—,I. 355. In the various persecutions of the Congregation the saint seeks refuge in prayer, I. 264, 307, 455, II. 233, 389, III. 74, 98, 225, 261, in Holy Mass, III. 207, 222, the fast on Saturday, II. 177, 257, the use of the discipline, II. 257, and regular observance, II. 50. He fears—less than defects , II. 50 (*Faults*).

PERSEVERANCE IN ONE'S VOCATION, to recommend one's self to the Blessed Virgin to obtain, I. 342; to pray daily for, I. 509, III. 34; grave obligation of the vow in the Congregation, III. 51.

PETREI LA, F. Pietro, C. SS. R., I. 252.

PHYSICIAN, obedience to, I. 381, II. 120, 149, 162, 280. Grave obligation of—to admonish patients about confession, V. 254.

PICCONE, F. Carmine, C. SS. R., I. 253–254.

PICCONE, Fr. Pietro Angelo, C. SS. R., I. 284–285.

PIOUS WORKERS, THE, communication in their privileges granted to the Congregation, I. 459, II. 378.

PIUS VI., the saint's anxiety for his election, III. 58–59; asks the Pope to accept his resignation, III. 102–103; dedicates to him *The Admirable Conduct of Divine Providence*, V. 109. Briefs of—to the saint, III. 182, V. 110, 155. The saint's justification in the affair of the *Regolamento*, III. 391–397; he implores the Pope's pardon, III. 461; the Pontiff solemnly declares his innocence, III. 373–374.

POLLIO, Alessio, servant of the saint, III. 371; the saint's kindness toward him, III. 309, 372, 491.

POMBAL, expels the Jesuits from Portugal, I. 546, IV. 129.

POPE, THE, teacher of truth, IV. 17; his superiority over Councils,

IV. 355. The saint willing to lay down his life for the Power of, V. 20 (*Infallibility*).

Portrait, how the saint's was secured, IV. 198–199, V. 16 (*Alphonsus, Virtues of the Saint, humility*).

Portugal, relations with Rome, IV. 444, 451; prohibition of works on Moral Theology, IV. 393, also of the saint's *Moral*, IV. 437, 444, and of the *Homo Apostolicus*, V. 14, 17.

Positano, projected foundation there, I. 67.

Poverty, the extreme poverty of the Congregation, II. 242, 391; the saint advocates the strictest, I. 287, 515, III. 53–54, 168 (*Redemptorists*).

Prayer, what one should ask of God, I. 190, II. 226, III. 123.

Preaching, the saint requires simple and apostolical, I. 583, II. 133, 257, 508, III. 154, 166, 262, V. 167, 206, 245–246. Letter to a Religious on, V. 359 (*Parish Priests, Redemptorists, Style*).

Presents, the saint refuses to receive, II. 9; forbids nuns to make, II. 98.

Priests, recommendations and ordinances to his, V. 256 (*Canons, Confessors, Mass, Parish Priests*).

Probabilism, of the saint, IV. 25, 39–40, V. 47–48, 91, 112–113, 132–139, 160 (*Alphonsus, Author, Equiprobabilism, Jesuits*); the saint clears up the question of—, IV. 418–421.

Probabiliorism, in what sense the saint calls himself a Probabiliorist, IV. 363, 416, 419–420, V. 48, 129, 160.

Profession, Religious, dispositions requisite, III. 471.

Puglia, the spiritual destitution of, I. 141–142, 146, 271.

Puoti, Francesco Paolo, a priest and friend of the saint, II. 132, IV. 395.

Puoti, Giovanni Maria (*Alphonsus, Supernatural Gifts*).

Puoti, Mgr. Antonio, Archbishop of Amalfi, his holiness of life, II. 37, 188.

Pupils should not live in the same house as the nuns, II. 21.

Purgatory, the saint recommends prayer for the souls in—, III. 285 (*Alphonsus, Spiritual Director*).

R

Raffaella, Maria della Carita, Redemptoristine, I. 19, III. 40–42, 274, 279, 281.

Redemptoristines, The, approved by the Holy See, I. 14, V. 275;

sketch of their Rule, I. 309; foundation in Sant' Agata, II. 132–133, 170–171, V. 275; rapid growth of this convent, II. 175, V. 302, 315. Good results expected by the saint, II. 133, 171; his encomiums of, II. 366, V. 42; his solicitude for their temporal welfare, II. 154, 167–168, 170–172, 366, for their spiritual progress, III. 40–43; counsels to the Superioress, III. 289–290, 491. Various counsels, III. 42–43, 113–114, 279–280, 285. He composes a little work for their direction, III. 284.

Redemptorists, enjoy on earth the greatest peace, I. 392; if they persevere they not only save themselves, I. 248, II. 60, but will have a high place in heaven, I. 342, 598, III. 33. Fervor of the first, I. 59, 340. The saint wishes to see them grateful to God for their vocation, I. 333, 598; become saints, I. 332, 509, II. 392, III. 311; united by mutual charity, I. 481; lovers of peace and harmony, II. 336, III. 226, V. 31; obedient to the Superiors, I. 252, 335, 349, 491, 555, II. 138, 486, 490, III. 34–35, 124; observant of the Rule, I. 512, II. 401, III. 32, and of the established customs of the Institute, II. 494; diligent in study (*Study*); given to prayer, I. 336, II. 401, III. 30, 34; lovers of Jesus Christ, I. 332, 341, II. 494, III. 29, 31; devout toward the Sacred Passion, I. 336, II. 221, 494, the most Blessed Sacrament, I. 336, and the Blessed Virgin Mary, III. 33 (*Fasting*); detached from seculars, I. 492, 521, II. 222; from relatives, I. 212, 268, 340, 374, 514, 550, II. 127, 221, III. 230, 482; from self-will, I. 58, 229; mortified men, II. 139; humble, I. 249, 266, II. 221; cheerfully bearing contempt, I. 267, 340; lovers of poverty, I. 340, II. 138, 221, 391, 490–491, III. 34, 480–481; content with frugal fare, I. 250, II. 491, V. 196, poor clothing, I. 515, II. 491, poor dwellings (*Rooms*); abhorrent of every voluntary fault, I. 249, 267, 333, 341, 509; constantly combating their faults, II. 400–401. He requires them not to change their abode, I. 274, 335; to say Mass with gravity, I. 517, III. 34; recite the Divine Office devoutly, III. 34; prepare their sermons well, II. 139; preach in a simple, apostolic style, I. 249, II. 491, 504, 508, III, 155, 166 (*Preaching*, *Style*).

Regolamento, The, imposed on the Congregation by the Neapolitan government, the framers of, III. 306–307, 433; grief of the saint, III. 331, 336, 368, 379 (*Pius VI*); how the saint received the—, III. 403–404, 406–407; it causes the dismemberment of the Congregation, III. 361, 372.

Remondini, Giuseppe and Giambattista, V. 41, 44, 58, 61, 71.

RENDINA, Br. Gennaro, I. 60.
RENEWALS OF MISSIONS, required by the Rule, I. 183, 208; very profitable to souls, I. 159–160.
RESERVATION, purely mental, never allowable, V. 141; not purely mental, allowable under certain circumstances, V. 141–142.
RESERVED CASES (*Cases*).
RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL, great merit of—in tribulation, III. 185 (*Conformity*).
RESTITUTIONS, how the religious should act with regard to uncertain, II. 489–491.
RETRACTIONS, the saint retracts several of his opinions, I. 338, III. 133 (*Alphonsus, Author*).
REVENGE, the saint's counsel concerning, I. 390.
REVISERS, trouble of the saint with—, I. 542, II. 49, 428, IV. 233, 263, 388 (*Neapolitan Government, Works of the Saint, Simioli*).
RIPA, D. Matteo, a priest, founder of the Congregation of the Holy Family, I. 60, III. 213–215.
RIZZI, F. Giovanni, C. SS. R., I. 580–581, 589, 592.
ROBERTIS, F. Celestino de, C. SS. R., I. 125–127, 575.
ROME, the saint not in favor of accepting a foundation there, III. 37–39, 160–162; subsequently he rejoices over the house established there, III. 447.
ROMITO, Br. Francesco Antonio, C. SS. R., II. 115.
ROOMS of the members of the Congregation should be small, I. 565.
ROSSI, Giambattista, archpriest of Ripacandida, founder of the Discalced Carmelites there, I. 292.
ROSSI, Mgr. Onofrio, successor of the saint in the See of Sant' Agata, III. 112.
ROSSI, F. Saverio, C. SS. R., I. 137.
RUBINI, D. Nicolo, Vicar-General of the saint, II. 271–272, V. 281.
RUBINI, D. Pasquale, the saint's lawyer at Naples, I. 418, 419, 431.
RULE OF LIFE: for the government of a monastery, I. 106–108, II. 416–417, 476; for a nun, I. 62–64, 75–78, 84, 577–579, III. 138–139; during a Retreat, II. 285–286; in times of spiritual dryness (*Desolation*); for the extraordinary way of perfection, I. 279–282; for a priest, V. 202; for a father of a family, II. 131, III. 35–36, 61–62; for a youth with regard to the choice of a state of life, II. 474 (*Alphonsus, Spiritual Director*).

S

Sagliano, D. Luigi, I. 309, 319–321.

Saints, became such by obedience even unto blood, II. 437, and by meditating on eternity, I. 596; no one attains great sanctity without suffering great crosses, II. 216, especially interior trials, II. 512. "Thy will be done" the words that have made all the —, III. 36. The jewels of the saints are contempt, contradictions, aridities, disgust even for the most holy things, II. 296.

Salvation depends on a real love for Jesus Christ and frequent recourse to his Blessed Mother Mary, V. 190.

Sanchez di Luna, Isidoro, Archbishop of Salerno, I. 542.

Sanctity, consists chiefly in being dead to self-will, I. 229, and in conforming to the will of God, II. 363 (*Conformity*); is acquired in the midst of thorns and contrarieties, II. 437 (*Obedience, Perfection, Saints*).

Sanseverino, F. Francesco, composes a compendium of Dogmatic Theology, I. 167; afterward Archbishop of Palermo and confessor to the king, II. 404, III. 91.

Sant' Agata de Goti, the condition of the diocese, III. 103, V. 266–287, 301–306, 314–319.

Santorelli, F. Constantino, C. SS. R., I. 531.

Sarnelli, D. Andrea, founder of the house at Pagani, I. 191, 196, II. 235.

Sarnelli, Domenico, one of the adversaries of the Congregation, I. 197.

Sarnelli, (Venerable) Gennaro, C. SS. R., I. 79, 104; the saint writes his Life, I. 131.

Sarnelli, Nicolo, Baron of Ciorani, his persecution of the Congregation, I. 460, 537, II. 223, III. 423, V. 131 (*Lawsuits*).

Sarpi, Paolo, suspected of unsoundness in matters of faith, IV. 439–441, 446, 464.

Scifelli, foundation of a house there, II. 477, 483–484, 487, III. 191; poverty of this foundation. II. 506, 528, III. 14, 80; flourishing condition of the novitiate there in 1782, III. 456.

Scruples, manner of overcoming, II. 189–199.

Seminarists of Sant' Agata, solicitude of the saint in their regard, V. 273; rules for their admission and their vacations, V. 209, 210 (*Candidates, Clerics, Ordinandi*).

SEMINARY OF SANT' AGATA, endeavors of the saint to rebuild—, V. 273, 302, 315.

SERMONS, LENTEN, rarely bring about conversions, III. 138; Redemptorists forbidden to conduct courses of—, I. 194; the saint grants a dispensation in this matter, II. 320; desires them to be preached in a simple and apostolic manner, V. 207.

SERSALE, Cardinal Antonio, Archbishop of Naples, the saint writes to him upon the government of his diocese, I. 327–329.

SERSALE, Giuseppe, a friend of the saint and of the Venerable Sarnelli, I. 131.

SICILY, the saint sends Fathers thither, I. 590; the success of the missions, III. 301–302 (*Girgenti*).

SICK, THE, the saint recommends assisting them, I. 83. 84, II. 277, 383; great charity toward—in the Congregation, I. 338–339, II. 433 (*Alphonsus, Virtues of the Saint*); opposed to having the sick brethren attended at their own homes, I. 550, II. 127. Privilege of celebrating Mass in their rooms, II. 379. How they should prepare for death, I. 60, 61, III. 185.

SICKNESS, a proof of the love of God, III. 68; we should draw spiritual profit from—, III. 185. The saint suffers in winter from his chest, I. 312, 541, II. 188, 279; almost every year he has a mortal—, IV. 163; he explains the pitiable state of his health to Pius VI., III. 102–103 (*Alphonsus, Virtues of the Saint*).

SIESTA not allowed to the lay-brothers of the Congregation, I. 409, 414.

SILENCE, the saint recommends the practice of—, I. 63.

SIMIOLI, Canon and Professor of Theology, appointed censor of the saint's works, IV. 433; being a disciple of Berti, he causes great annoyance to the saint, V. 19, 21, 29.

SLEEP, the saint advises that sufficient time be allotted to, I. 228, 372.

SOCIETY OF JESUS, great esteem of the saint for, II. 125, 265; grief at its persecution, II. 226; in Portugal (*Pombal*); in Spain, II. 212; his zeal in defending—, I. 567, 572 (*Jesuits*).

SPARANO, D. Giuseppe, a priest, I. 114.

SPINELLI, Giuseppe, Cardinal, his kindness toward the saint, I. 148–149, 205–209.

SPORTELLI, F. Cæsare, C. SS. R., I. 93–94.

STAMPO, author of a Moral Theology that is too rigorous, V. 46, 52

STRINA, F. Andrea, C. SS. R., I. 344.

STUDENTS OF THE CONGREGATION, their spiritual director, I. 529,

551–552; explanation of some points of their Rule, I. 470. Recommendations to, I. 590–592; advice with regard to studies, I. 480–481, 484–485, II. 161; should exercise themselves in dialectics, I. 566.

STUDY recommended to the members of the Congregation, 336–338, V. 351.

STYLE, pompous, to be avoided in preaching, I. 249, II. 491; causes injury to souls, V. 206 (*Preaching*).

SUPERIORESS OF NUNS should see that the spiritual exercises are given every year, II. 417 (*Conscience*, *Rule of Life*).

SUPERIORS OF THE CONGREGATION, the honor that should be shown to, I. 252–253; the greatest glory they can give to God is to watch over the house confided to them, I. 228; should be zealous for the observance of the Rule, I. 147, 338–339, III. 170; should govern with mildness and firmness, and not tolerate any faults, II. 220, 227; administer correction, especially when faults give rise to scandal, I. 333, III. 55; correct only when they have become calm, and in private (*Correction*); should be full of charity toward their subjects, I. 338 (*Sick*); not burden them with too much work, III. 168; see that wholesome food is provided, II. 219; take care that every one makes the annual retreat of ten days, I. 344, 461, III. 246, and the manifestation of conscience every month, I. 338, 520, III. 168, 483; watchful over the correspondence of the subjects, I. 461, III. 482 (*Correspondence*); maintain poverty, I. 514, III. 168, 479–481; hold the consultation every month, III. 169; should not remain from home for too long a time, I. 225, 527; should be prudent in the erection of new buildings, I. 405, III. 80 (*Building*); frequently inculcate love for Jesus Christ and his Sacred Passion, I. 336. The saint will accuse at the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ those who have been too condescending, I. 333. Various recommendations to, I. 519–522, III. 298–300.

SUPERIORS OF THE MISSIONS, obedience due to—, I. 521; their care for the confessions of the faithful, the community prayers of the subjects, I. 358, 361, III. 299, 477–479, the monthly retreat, II. 505, III. 167, and the chapter of faults, I. 358, III. 164, 299; their duty with regard to useless visits, III. 165, 477–478, the food of the missionaries, I. 250, III. 165, 478. Various recommendations to—, I. 562, II. 503–506, III. 298–300 (*Missions*).

SYNODS, DIOCESAN, their advantages, V. 286–287; the saint omits them for fear of government interference, V. 242.

T

Tannoia, F. Antonio, C. SS. R., I. 329–330.
Tannucci, Bernardo, the saint dedicates one of his works to him, V. 22; fear that he would expel the Fathers from Sicily, II. 450, and ruin the entire Congregation, III. 86; the fall of—, III. 171–172.
Tartaglione, Br. Francesco, C. SS. R., I. 214, 258, 398, III. 18, V. 94, 356.
Telesca, F. Domenico, C. SS. R., III. 22.
Temptations, a source of spiritual profit, II. 273, 292.
Tepidity, its nature, II. 92–93; its danger, I. 359–360.
Teresa, St., severity of her Rule, II. 346; the patroness of the saint, II. 204; he calls her his second mother, I. 20.
Testa, Mgr. Matteo Gennaro, at first, a benefactor of the Congregation, III. 90, as Grand Almoner he does it much injury, III. 369.
Testament of the saint, I. 158.
Thomas Aquinas, St., the great regard of Alphonsus for all the opinions of—, V. 118–119.
Tonsure, the form of—for ecclesiastics, V. 263–264.
Torrice, failure of the projected foundation, III. 77, 80, 144.
Tournelly, the saint wishes that his Theology be the text-book of the students, I. 457, 497, 522, IV. 46, 61, 65, 67.
Tramontano, D. Salvatore, a priest, secures the portrait of the saint, IV. 198–199.
Tribulation, prayer our only refuge in—, II. 414 (*Crosses*).
Tutiorism, the cause of great ruin to souls, IV. 335, 337, 338, 363.
Tutiorists, who they are, IV. 363; the saint would not grant them faculties to hear confessions, IV. 252.

V

Verzella, D. Felice, a priest, secretary of the saint, II, 453, V. 33.
Villani, F. Andrea, C. SS. R., I. 161; the spiritual director of the saint, I. 298.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, the saint endeavors to introduce the daily visit in his diocese, II. 35; his success, II. 9, V. 283.

VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE, a great blessing, I. 333, 597–600; its loss a greater evil than death, II. 127, 221–222, makes one unhappy in this life, I. 248–249, 334, II. 400, causes disquietude at death, II. 433, III. 31, and exposes one to eternal ruin; I. 242, 348, 413, 599, III. 33. It is lost by pride, I. 266, II. 400, by deliberate faults, I. 249, 267, 341, 512, III. 31, by attachment to relatives (*Parents*). Temptations against it are most dangerous on account of their consequences, I. 342, 513, 598. Means of perseverance in it: to love Jesus Christ, I. 598–599, to ask it continually of God, I. 510, 513, and in temptation to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin Mary, I. 342. 598.

VOLTAIRE, the saint's joy on hearing of the conversion of—, III. 278; he makes inquiries concerning it, V. 173, and speaks of the death of—, V. 174–175.

W

WAY OF THE CROSS recommended by the saint to his subjects, I. 336.

WITNESS, his obligations when interrogated by the judge, V. 143–149.

WORKS OF GOD rise out of nothing and from the midst of contradictions, I. 59,

WORKS OF ST. ALPHONSUS:—

ASCETICAL:—"Abridged Sermons for all the Sundays of the Year;" the difficulties this work encountered among the censors, II. 428, 438, IV. 461, 467, V. 5, 7, 11, 15; its merits, III. 154–155, IV. 455.

"Ceremonies of the Mass," IV. 412.

"Considerations for Bishops for the Good Government of their Dioceses," IV. 195.

"Considerations for Persons Called to the Religious State," IV. 464.

"Counsels Addressed to the Nuns of the Most Holy Redeemer living in the Convents of Sant' Agata and Scala," III. 280, 284.

"Counsels on Religious Vocation," I. 532, II. 438, IV. 464.

"Darts of Fire, or the Proofs which Jesus Christ has given us of his Love in the Work of our Redemption,"—the saint reads a

portion of it every day, II. 270; recommends it to his confreres, II. 401.

" Devout Reflections upon Various Points of Spiritual Life," V. 68; he composes this work for souls desirous of belonging entirely to God, and uses it himself every day, II. 513.

" Discourses for the Octave of Christmas, and Meditations for Advent to the Octave of Epiphany," IV. 91; he recommends this work to the members of the Congregation, IV. 401.

" Discourses for Times of Public Calamity," IV. 92, 105.

" Encouragement for Novices to Persevere in their Vocation," IV. 464.

" Glories of Mary," a work most dear to the saint, IV. 89; meets with the greatest opposition, I. 234, IV. 51; its extraordinary diffusion, IV. 69, 76, 81, 84–85, 121–122.

" Hymns and Canticles," I. 307.

" Letter to a Bishop on the Great Utility of the Holy Missions," IV. 464, V. 404.

" Letter to a Religious on the Manner of Preaching," V. 359; the occasion of this work, I. 583; is well received, IV. 164, 464; its extensive circulation, V. 35.

" Letter to a Young Student on the Choice of a State of Life," IV. 464.

" Life of Father Gennaro Maria Sarnelli, C. SS. R., I. 131, IV. 176.

" Life of Father Paolo Cafaro, C. SS. R.," IV. 177, 202.

" Life of Vito Curzio, Lay-brother of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer," IV. 176.

" Manner of Assisting the Dying," IV. 141, 146.

" Manner of Conversing continually with God," I. 281.

" Meditations for a Private Retreat of Eight Days," IV. 164, 355.

" Motives of Consolation and Confidence for a Soul in Desolation," V. 111.

" Novena for Christmas," II. 217, IV. 82, 91, 95, 102, 105.

" Novena in honor of St. Teresa," I. 307, 362.

" Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus," II. 217, IV. 82, 92, 95.

" Novena for the Souls in Purgatory," V. 108.

" Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ," II. 266, IV. 379, 387; well received in Naples, II. 292, IV. 405.

" Preparation for Death," he recommends it to the members of the Congregation, II. 401; its worth, III. 155, IV. 95. 105.

WORKS OF ST. ALPHONSUS, ASCETICAL, *Continued:*—

"Preparation for Mass and Thanksgiving after Mass," IV. 92, 95; the saint uses it himself every day, II. 217.

"Quiet for Scrupulous Souls in Obedience to their Director," III. 231.

"Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ," IV. 355.

"Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ and other Spiritual Topics," II. 463, V. 55, 63.

"Rule for Seminaries," he sends this work to the Bishops, I. 472, 474.

"Selva, or Collection of Material for Sermons and Instructions for Ecclesiastical Retreats," I. 547, IV. 133.

"Septenary in honor of St. Joseph," IV. 92.

"Short Practice of Perfection, taken from the Writings of St. Teresa," the saint recommends the reading of this work, I. 473.

"Short Treatise on the Love of God and the Means of Acquiring It," V. 111.

"Short Treatise on the Necessity of Prayer," a very useful and popular work, IV. 94, 97, 100.

"The Mass and the Office that are hurriedly said," the saint sends this work to the Bishops, I. 576, 580; it gives general satisfaction, IV. 164.

"The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, with a Short Explanation of the Prayers at Mass," V. 107.

"Translation of the Psalms and Canticles of the Divine Office," V. 73; costs the saint great labor, II. 522, V. 93, 99; its dedication (*Clement XIV*); its merits, V. 76; received favorably in Naples, V. 105, and in great demand, V. 122.

"The True Spouse of Jesus Christ, or the Religious Sanctified by means of the Virtues proper to her State," I. 597, IV. 146; it is read in all the convents, IV. 392.

"The Victories of the Martyrs," III. 288, V. 101, 104–107.

"The Way of the Cross," IV. 437.

"The Way of Salvation, or Meditations and Pious Practices for Acquiring Eternal Salvation," IV. 343; the saint recommends it, and uses it continually, IV. 375.

"The Will of God," I. 440, IV. 94, 97, 100.

"Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary for Every Day of the Month," I. 132–133; has an extensive sale, IV. 43, 69, 76, 81, 85, 122; is translated into French, III. 198.

DOGMATIC: "Admirable Conduct of Divine Providence in Saving Mankind through Jesus Christ," the scope of this work, V. 108, 123, 168; its merits, V. 111, 120, 170; its dedication (*Pius VI*).

"Defence of the Supreme Power of the Holy See against Justinus Febronius," the occasion of this work, IV. 382–383; costs the saint great labor, IV. 386, 393, 394, 397; is expected to prove very useful, IV. 384; published with the greatest precaution, IV. 396–397 (*Neapolitan Government*).

"Dissertation against the Errors of Modern Unbelievers, called Materialists and Deists," I. 438, 442, IV. 334; its merits, IV. 43–44, 85, 95; is well received, IV. 97.

"Evidences of Faith, or the Truth of Faith made Evident from the Motives of Credibility," IV. 183, 194, 231; difficulties with the reviser, IV. 205, 208.

"Great Means of Salvation," IV. 105, 113, 117; the saint desires its extensive circulation, IV. 117; it is well received, IV. 120, 377.

"Manner in which Grace Operates," IV. 423.

"Reply to an Author who has Censured a Work of F. D. Alfonso de' Liguori on the Blessed Virgin, entitled *Glories of Mary*," IV. 51.

"Reply to the Extravagant Reform Attempted by Abbate Rolli against the Devotion shown to the Mother of God," V. 111.

"Response to an Anonymous Publication, entitled *Dissertation on the Mass-Stipend*," IV. 414–415.

"The Council of Trent, or Dogmatic Work against the Pretended Reformers," beginning of this work, IV. 249; twice submitted to the censors of the government, IV. 433, 446, 450; is found irreprehensible, IV. 452, 454, 464; its merits, IV. 422–423, 428, 432–433; its dedication (*Clement XIV*).

"The Obedience due to the Definitions of the Council," IV. 423.

"Theologico-moral Treatises on the Last Things," the scope of this work, V. 111–112; its worth, V. 124.

"The Triumph of the Church, or The History of the Heresies, with their Refutation," the labor of the saint in composing, II. 429, 448, V. 54; trouble with the censors, IV. 466, V. 7, 19–21, 29, 32; its merits, IV. 455, 457, 460, 464–465, V. 33, 34, 39, 65, 68; its dedication (*Tanucci*).

WORKS OF ST. ALPHONSUS, DOGMATIC, *Continued:*—

"The Truth of Divine Revelation, against the Principal Objections of the Deists," V. 67, 120.

"The Truth of Faith, a Work against Materialists who deny the Existence of God, against Deists who deny Revealed Religion, and against Sectaries who deny that the Catholic Church is the One True Church," IV. 333; the scope of this work, IV. 432; a compendium of several works, IV. 349, 371; the saint expects much good to be effected by it, IV. 341, 343; is received with great favor, IV. 372, 373.

MORAL: "Apology for the Moral Theology, accused by some of Laxism, and of defending a Lax Probabilistic System," II. 321, 325, 396, IV. 443, 444, 445; why composed, IV. 451; its worth, IV. 454.

"Apology of his Lordship Mgr. D. Alfonso de' Liguori, Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti, or A Defence of the Dissertation etc., against the Attacks of a Very Rev. F. Lector, who styles himself Adelfo Dositeo," why it was composed, IV. 271–272, 425; places his *System* in a clear light, IV. 274; its worth, II. 129, 150, IV. 325, 341; his adversaries try to impede its circulation, IV. 280–281, 282, 286–290.

"Apology to a Letter of a Religious concerning the Use of the Equiprobable Opinion," IV. 241; is praised by the Pope and the Cardinals, IV. 255; its merits, IV. 243.

"Dissertation on Invincible Ignorance," IV. 294, 297.

"Dissertation on the Just Prohibition and Extirpation of Bad Books," I. 547, IV. 119, 123; difficulty encountered with the censor, I. 542.

"Dissertation on the Moderate Use of the Probable Opinion," IV. 257.

Dissertatio scholastico-moralis pro usu moderato opinionis probabilis in concursu probabilioris, I. 380.

"Elenchus of ninety-nine Opinions retracted after the first Edition of Moral Theology in 1748," I. 380, IV. 34, 63.

"Examination of Candidates for Ordination," IV. 50, 54, 58.

"Exposition of the System maintained by the Author regarding the Rule of Moral Actions, to which is added an Answer to New Objections," III. 24–25; why composed, V. 89–91.

"Fidelity of Subjects to God renders them Faithful to the Prince, their Ruler," III. 212.

"Guide for Country Confessors," IV. 221, 226, 236, 258; difficulty with the censors, IV. 233; the saint fears to have it printed at Naples, II. 72, IV. 230.

Homo Apostolicus (Latin Translation of the *Instruction and Practice* with notes and changes, made by others, IV. 74, 76, 96); the saint praises this work, IV. 239, V. 128; desires it to be the text-book of our students, IV. 108, 131, and the seminarists of Sant' Agata, II. 79, IV. 193, 209; complains of the poor revision of the first edition, IV. 140, 143, 146, 161, 164, 197, 201, 239; its extensive circulation, IV. 442, V. 17, 65.

Instructio catechetica ad populum in præcepta Decalogi et Sacramenta, a translation of an Italian work of the saint, made under his direction, IV. 385, by a Canon of Sant' Agata, IV. 388.

"Instruction and Practice for Confessors," the purpose of this work, IV. 42; the saint fears that he may not be able to publish it in Italian, IV. 67, but receives encouragement from Rome, IV. 77; reasons for the edition in the vernacular, IV. 69; it costs him great labor, IV. 60; its merits, IV. 64, 145, 161; received with great applause, IV. 149, 150, 154.

"Instructions on the Commandments and Sacraments," a little work composed for the missions, IV. 249, 375, 376.

"Moderate Use of the Probable Opinion," its dedication (*Clement XIII*); its merits, IV. 319, 321, 324.

Monitum in quo exponitur Decretum S. C. Generalis Inquisitionis Romanæ conditum 1761, *circa usus opinionum probabilium*," IV. 302, 315.

Monitum pertinens ad quæstionem an usus probabilium opinionum sit vel ne licitus aliquando," V. 57, 58–59, 61, 129.

"Moral Theology," the saint composes it principally for the members of the Congregation, I. 337, IV. 13, 16; the work of fifteen years, V. 45; a remarkable collection of much matter in small space, IV. 40; unique in the number of its citations and decrees, IV. 235, 380, V. 46; its dedication (*Nicolai, Benedict XIV*); Benedict XIV. praises it as a work of universal utility, I. 369; received with applause at Rome, V. 124, in Spain and France, III. 205, in Germany, III. 205, V. 70; likewise at Naples, V. 45, 56, 79; the saint lives to see nine editions, V. 156.

"Practice of the Confessor," I. 203–204, 367, IV. 36–39.

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